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ABSTRACT

Guidelines for the development of the Dutch educational system from 1975 to 1995 are presented in this booklet. Part of a series of reviews of member countries' educational planning and policy, this document is presented in three parts. Part I, Background Report, is the official English summary of the original report titled "Contours of a Future Education System" and known as the Contours Memorandum. It emphasizes educational objectives, the social implications of education, the teacher's role, costs, and efficiency, and describes ideal future schools from the elementary level through higher education. Part II, Examiners' Report and Questions, presents the report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) examiners who visited the Netherlands in 1976: This section includes criticisms and comments on all phases of the original report and specific questions on statements made in the report. Part III, The Confrontation Meeting, gives an account of the discussion which took place at the May 1976 meeting of the OECD Education Committee between the examiners and the Dutch delegation. A list of the examiners and the Dutch delegation members is included in the report. (Author/DB)

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NETHERLANDS

CONTOURS OF A FUTURE EDUCATION SYSTEM

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REVIEWS OF
NATIONAL POLICIES
FOR EDUCATION

NETHERLANDS

CONTOURS OF A FUTURE EDUCATION SYSTEM

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
PARIS 1976

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PREFACE

In September 1975, the Dutch Minister of Education, Dr. Jos van Kemenade, produced a discussion document entitled 'Contours of a Future Education System'. This 'Contours Memorandum', as it came to be known, suggests guidelines for the development of the Dutch system over the next 20 years, ranging from an integrated primary school for 4 - 12 year olds to proposals for the unification of the higher education sector. It was proposed that the document should be open for discussion and comment until August 1976, following which a second version would be published. It was as part of this process of initial debate that the OECD undertook to carry out a review of the document in its series of reviews of Member countries' educational policy and planning. In a sense, this exercise represents a departure from the normal run of OECD reviews, in that it deals with a set of proposals and guidelines rather than with the actual functioning of existing policies, but it was thought that the approach to planning adopted by the Dutch in this instance offered an unusual opportunity to apply the established review technique at an early stage in policy formulation, even if it entailed mounting and carrying out the review in a rather compressed period of time.

The Examiners visited the Netherlands in March 1976; their report was discussed at the May meeting of the OECD Education Committee, and forms Part II of this volume. Part I is the official English summary of the Contours Memorandum (the whole document was published in English, and it should be noted that this summary gives only the barest of bones), and Part III is an account of the discussion which took place in the Education Committee. A list of the Examiners and the Dutch delegation is to be found in the Annex.

The OECD Secretariat wishes to thank both the Examiners for the energy and commitment with which they carried out their task, and the Dutch authorities for their willingness to engage in public debate and their whole-hearted co-operation in the execution of the exercise.

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Part One

BACKGROUND REPORT

CONTOURS OF A FUTURE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE NETHERLANDS

(Summary of a Discussion Memorandum
prepared by the
Ministry of Education and Science)

CONTOURS OF A FUTURE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE NETHERLANDS

Summary of a Discussion Memorandum

The contours of a coherent education system to be introduced into the Netherlands before the year 2000 - this is the subject of a lengthy discussion memorandum published on 18 June by the Minister of Education and Science, Dr. J.A. van Kemenade, and the two State Secretaries of Education and Science, Dr. G. Klein (higher education) and Dr. A. Veerman (secondary education).

The memorandum, entitled 'Contours of a future education system', is intended as an initial proposal addressed to Dutch educational circles. Organisations and individuals are invited to submit their comments to the Minister before 1 August 1976 and in this way to take part in discussion on the education system that the Minister and State Secretaries wish to see. They will look at the memorandum again in the light of the comments and revise it as they think desirable. This will be followed by a second round of discussions. On the basis of these, a firmer proposal will be formulated and presented to Parliament.

Broader educational objectives

There has been a shift in the objectives and in the function of education over the years, as is very clearly apparent from the considerations underlying succeeding attempts to raise the school-leaving age, successful or otherwise, ever since 1806.

At first the overriding consideration was the protection of the most defenceless members of society against exploitation; later the emphasis fell on the need for skilled and professional manpower, while, in the last ten years especially, the right of the individual to develop his full potential and the need to prepare him for a place in society in the broadest sense have gained the upper hand.

This shift in educational objectives, and thus in the educational system and its content, has of course not happened by chance. It is determined very largely by the opportunities available, the demands made and the views held by society or in certain parts of it. So education will always be on the move, because society is constantly changing partly under the influence of that very education. This is a process that was not begun yesterday and will continue forever.

Two-way influence between education and society

Education is not above time and place. It is a part of that very society which leaves its stamp on it. The social conditions and values prevailing in a society are reflected in its educational system and the content and methods used in the system, and in the interest shown in education by parents and pupils. They also limit the power of education to introduce changes in society. For instance, the opportunities for everyone to make use of educational facilities are not only decided by the organisation and nature of the education system itself but by the income of the parents, the home background of the pupils and the amenities available in the neighbourhood.

Thus the measure in which education can and will devote attention to developing a range of human characteristics is dependent on the value placed on those characteristics by society. This value is expressed in income and power and thus determines to a large extent the interest of parents and pupils in certain school achievements. But education is not dependent on its social surroundings alone. It can also influence the development of society and in fact has done so. Thanks to the schools, the level of education of broad strata of the population has risen considerably. Partly due to the schools, knowledge and culture are no longer a monopoly of the few; prosperity has increased and the old sharp distinction between social classes has become blurred. Thanks to education, the desire and also the opportunity to participate in decision-making at work, in the neighbourhood, in the municipality or at national level has increased.

Though education cannot of itself create new social conditions and more equality in society, it can make a major contribution. And a sound education system is definitely an essential condition for the success of a policy designed to achieve these things.

The importance of education to the individual and society

It is therefore of great importance to consider how and to what extent education should contribute to the further development of equality in society and to consider the changes needed in the system to achieve it. This is probably truer nowadays than it has ever been, because the importance of education to people and society has become steadily greater and social changes are more basic and taking place more rapidly.

A grasp of the ever more intricate issues in society is hardly possible without a fairly lengthy period of education and training. The articulateness and resilience needed by the citizens of a democratic society require continuous education in length and breadth.

The position people acquire in society and the power they derive from it are determined to an increasing extent by the knowledge and

training they possess. The distribution of power and the preservation of democratic control require, more than ever, a fair distribution of educational opportunities.

Knowledge is changing very fast at present, but so are norms and values, and the requirements of professional life.

People are being faced more and more often and at ever shortening intervals with new choices and new tasks; they are confronted with problems and changed circumstances whose existence they had never even suspected a short time before.

Without adequate education and training that has taught them independence, and without opportunities of making use of educational facilities later in life, many people will be defenceless in the face of these things and will lose their grasp on their own situation.

Education, then, has become an essential factor in maintaining and raising the level of prosperity and welfare in society. At the same time, however, it has become so costly that its unbridled growth could endanger that very prosperity and welfare.

Because of all these factors, more and more will be demanded of education in the future and many changes will be necessary.

Such changes cannot and must not be left to chance. The development and renewal of education require first and foremost a look into the future. This discussion memorandum is an attempt to do this.

Main points

The main points from the discussion memorandum published on 18 June 1975 are:

a) a new primary school for the 4 to 12 age group, to take the place of the present nursery school for 4 and 5 year olds and the primary school for 6 to 12 year olds;
b) a middle school for all 12 to 16 year olds;
c) a high school for those aged 16 and over, with 3 departments:
   1. a two-year academic department, which gives direct entry to higher education;
   2. a vocational department with a 3 to 4 year course, offering training for employment in medium-grade positions;
   3. a vocational department with a 2 to 3 year course, offering training for lower grade functions;
d) higher education, on the principle of the co-ordination of the universities and higher vocational education;
e) the introduction of the open school as the last link in the educational structure;
f) raising of the school-leaving age to 18;
g) special education; fewer types of school and more attention paid to the educational needs of the child.

No decisions yet

The Minister and State Secretaries emphatically state that the realisation of the ideas in the memorandum is still completely open. 'The memorandum is not intended to be more than a contribution to a discussion regarding changes in the education system in the coming twenty to twenty-five years.'

The plans may yet be altered considerably after the contributions of the many people interested have been incorporated, and their validity will also have to be tested in experiments, while the financial consequences will also have to be closely examined.

The effects on the budget and on the national economy will have to be carefully looked at and will have to form part of future consideration of possibilities and priorities. The creation of opportunities for education and training for many people who have thus far been deprived of them will require great sacrifices. At present educational expenditure already accounts for about 28 per cent of the Dutch national budget.

Consequently, the authors of the memorandum expressly put forward various radical measures to cut down costs. 'Better education for many cannot and need not be more expensive education. We must however be aware that probably much of what we are proposing here will only be possible if economies are made at the same time; not least within education itself.' The authors go on to remark that the proposals they have worked out mean putting a knife into the whole social system. They may have drastic effects on many areas of policy. They point out, for example, that those who are receiving education and training can make little if any contribution to the economic production process.

Recommendations

Putting the proposals into effect is therefore dependent on policy choices which do not lie only in the policy area of the Minister of Education and Science. Consequently, recommendations on the memorandum will be sought from the Provisional Scientific Council for Government Policy, the Socio-Economic Council, the Education Council, the Council for Youth Education, the Central Planning Office, the Socio-Cultural Planning Office and the Educational Planning Office (at present being set up). In addition, the broad ministerial consultations will be continued. The resulting recommendations and the outcome of the consultations will be incorporated in a later memorandum.

Why

The reasons behind the memorandum are explained in full in the first part. In the opinion of the statesmen concerned education is constantly getting new responsibilities allotted to it. The reason for this, they think, is that more and more demands are being made on the social functioning of each one of us. So education can no longer be confined to teaching the skills and understanding needed for exercising a profession. It must also be designed to prepare people to take part in other social activities, such as decision-making at work, in the district, in the municipality or at national level.

Education must offer to all members of society the opportunity to develop their very different talents. It must make everyone more articulate and resilient and thus give them more access to knowledge, work and above all, decision-making.

Postponing the choice of school

The authors of the memorandum feel that education must be thoroughly reformed in the long term if there is to be a better distribution of social opportunities.

In the first place, school and neighbourhood, school and parents, in short, school environment and home environment should be brought closer together. Education and upbringing should reinforce each other as much as possible.

In the second place, preselection at an early stage must be avoided. This means that the education system must be such that children do not have to make a choice from a number of separate schools as early as their twelfth or thirteenth year, which is usually final and determines to a great extent their position in society for the rest of their lives.

The education system should be such that vital decisions of this kind can be postponed to the fifteenth or sixteenth year, when individual capacities have come more clearly to the fore. Until then there should be plenty of scope for courses adapted to individual differences in rate of working, interest and ability courses which can be flexibly matched to the many changes that are likely to occur in these respects in the age-group in question.

In the third place, nursery and primary education must be arranged in such a way that it can more easily take account of the stages of development the children have reached and of differences in their social and cultural backgrounds.

Among the requirements for this are the elimination of the distinction between nursery school and primary school, doing away with

the subject matter/age/class system and developing teaching methods more geared to individual abilities and experience.

Finally there must be facilities for second chance education which are readily accessible.

Danger

The authors of the memorandum then point out the danger of increasing social inequality between people with different gifts or different educational standards. 'Educational change which only brings about more equal opportunities for a new social inequality although it may well solve the present inequality in social relations, runs the risk of evoking a new and possibly more distinct social dichotomy.'

They therefore believe that an education policy which aims at more equality must not be confined to the creation of equal opportunities for participation in educational facilities for different individuals or groups. 'It must moreover be designed to improve the opportunities for developing different gifts and especially to improve the articulateness and social resilience of all, regardless of their gifts.'

The authors note here that the emergence of a new social inequality cannot be prevented by education policy alone. It also depends on the measure in which society accords income, power and prestige to certain educational achievements.

Structure

The above principles are reflected in the content and structure of basic education for children from 4 to 16 years of age and of further education. The authors divide basic education into three types of school, i.e. the new primary school intended for children from 4 to 12 years of age, special schools, and the middle school for all pupils aged between 12 and 16 years. For further education they suggest a high school for young people aged between 16 and 19 years.

After high school there is higher education for those suited for it. At high school standard and above there should also be a series of facilities for further education for people to make use of for their whole lives. These include facilities enabling people to make up for missed educational opportunities (second chance education). On reaching school-leaving age at 18 young people have the opportunity of combining further education with a full-time or part-time job (second road to education).

The new primary school

As has already been said, the new primary education is intended for girls and boys aged from 4 to 12 years. This first stage of basic education, taking 8 years, is designed to achieve the continuous development of the pupils. Allowance is also made for individual differences exhibited by the pupils in passing through the successive stages of development.

The authors point out a number of difficulties likely to be encountered on the way to achieving a new primary school:

- The transfer from nursery school to ordinary primary school is determined by the calendar age of the children and is therefore a handicap to their continuous development.
- The subject matter/year/class system does not allow for individual differences in development potential.
- Affective, expressive and creative training, and learning to master social skills, are too little emphasised.
- The strict division into subjects does not tally with the image of the world held by nursery school children and primary school children.
- School is insufficiently adapted to the use of language, the behaviour standards and the pattern of life of the pupils.
- Periods of marking time in the development process are too little recognised. Sometimes children are referred too readily to special schools.

Features

A foreign language should be compulsory for all children at the new primary school. Other features are:

- the development of the personality of each child in an uninterrupted process of education, development and learning;
- the creation of equal opportunities;
- adequate attention paid to the individual identity of the nursery child and that of the child in subsequent phases of development;
- prompt recognition and examination of periods of marking time in the development and learning process and offering suitable help to individual pupils;
- the creation of learning and teaching situations adapted to the aptitude of the pupils.

Measures

The statesmen announce the following measures:

- A form of nursery and primary teaching will have to be worked out which integrates the educational objectives of the two separate systems.

- Special statutory measures will have to be taken for integral experiments, co-operation experiments and isolated experiments.
- Measures at administrative level, considering the fact that primary schools receive children from various nursery schools, so that many problems will have to be solved.

Special education

Special education covers all the educational facilities for children with a handicap of a mental, physical or social nature and who are therefore incapable of following the teaching at an ordinary primary or middle school.

The statesmen urge that primary school and middle school facilities should be such that fewer children have to be referred to special schools. A flexible set of special education facilities must help to ensure that problem children are only removed entirely from ordinary schools in extreme cases.

The number of types of special school will have to be reduced from about 20 to just a few. The distinction between the types of school is at present based largely on medical criteria. Insufficient account is taken of the educational needs of the children.

Clear referral and admission criteria will have to be applied for children who are thought eligible for special education. A distinction between primary education and middle school education is not thought desirable for special schools. The authors have in mind four types of special education:

- motor oriented education. This type of education is meant for children who are destined, through faulty powers of reasoning, to occupy those jobs where motoric and manual achievements predominate over intellectual ones.
- remedial education, for preparing children to return to ordinary primary school.
- compensatory education, for children with organic disorders.
- therapeutic education, for children with mental disorders.

The authors feel that in the long term efforts must be made to integrate ordinary and special education, especially in the educational sense.

Furthermore, they wish to take the necessary measures in the matter of curriculum development, the initial training and in-service training of teachers, school building and teaching aids. The staff of school advisory services for special education will also have to be increased.

Teachers in special schools will need to have specialised training in addition to their ordinary primary school teacher training.

In addition, there will have to be new training courses at new national institutes for teachers giving very special help.

Any increase in the number of types of school in the near future will be stopped. The merging of two or more types of school will be encouraged. The same applies to integration where this is educationally justified.

The middle school

After primary school, in the new education system, children go to the middle school. For the time being the statesmen have opted for a middle school for all children from 12 to 16 years of age, so that there will be no other schools for this age group. They do feel however the experiments will have to show whether an age group of 11 to 15 might not be better. Just as in the new primary school, the emphasis in the middle school will be on developing the knowledge and skills which everyone needs to be able to function properly in society.

In the case of the middle school this includes:

- orientation for the pupils for their later choice of study or profession; and
- the provisional determination, subject to modification, of the pupils' abilities in this regard.

In the middle school all pupils will be placed in unselected age groups regardless of their abilities or backgrounds. These are called heterogeneous age groups. The children will then be placed in different groups for various subjects according to their ability and interests (the homogeneous groups).

A development report will be drawn for each pupil as he gets to the end of the middle school. This will include his level of achievement, skills, gifts and interests. It will also contain indications of his capacity for further study and his choice of profession.

Points of departure

As the main principles of the middle school the authors state:

- A complete group of pupils of one age range will follow a common course of general and vocational education irrespective of their aptitude and background or achievements up to then. This does not mean that all pupils in one year would be offered all parts of the course at the same level. The statesmen reject a unified school of this kind out of hand. 'The less gifted children would be failures, the gifted children would be held back and the average child would become the norm.' Breaking down the barriers in the present categorial system must not in their opinion be allowed to bring about uniformity and levelling down. 'On the contrary, a new form of education must emerge in which every individual pupil can develop his personality according to his ability interest and skill.'

- The postponement of the choice of further study or of vocation to a later date.
- Continuation of the endeavours of the primary school to offer equal, i.e. optimal, opportunities for development.
- Broadening the subject matter offered to 12 to 16 year olds.
- Offering teaching and learning situations suitable for individual development and for arousing social awareness.

Features

The main features of the middle school, based on the above principles, are formulated as follows:

a) early, unilateral selection will be avoided as much as possible and replaced by a system of placement in a number of different ability groups (the homogeneous groups);
b) the time of the more or less final choice of further study and profession will be postponed if possible until after the 16th year;
c) equality of opportunity, that is to say real opportunities for development for all pupils, will be made the central tenet as much as possible;
d) not only intellectual and technical qualities will count, but certainly also creative, artistic, organisational and social qualities;
e) the learning processes are geared as far as possible to varying types of pupil.

Mixed ability grouping

The authors of the memorandum regard mixed ability grouping as the ideal which the middle school must endeavour to achieve. But they see many difficulties in the way. They remark that it is a question of navigating carefully and cautiously between Scylla and Charybdis. The dangers to be avoided are:

- If every middle school leaver can and is allowed to begin on every course of further education, every high school course must start at the minimum level of the slowest and least gifted pupil. This is impossible, if only because the financial resources are limited.
- If the further education courses are allowed to set their own requirements in the matter of previous education in the middle school (as stated in the development report) there is a considerable chance that in fact streaming will be dictated from outside in spite of the mixed ability labels.

The statesmen urge that the ideal of mixed ability grouping be realised as far as possible by many and various experiments.

High school

Attendance at middle school should be followed, according to the memorandum, by attendance at high school for 16 to 19 year olds. The following three departments are listed for the high school:

- an academic stream, one of whose aims is to prepare students for higher education. Courses in this department would be of two years' duration.
- a vocational stream with a course of three or four years. This department would prepare students for medium grade functions. On special conditions referring to the final level obtained, it would be possible for students to go on to certain higher education courses.
- a vocational stream with courses of short duration, offering training for lower grade functions. The courses in this department would take two or three years. Students from this stream could also go on to further study on certain conditions, i.e. the longer vocational courses.

This would be a new type of school very much geared to social reality.

Emphasis must also be laid on the independence of the students. The accent would shift from teaching to independent learning. The statesmen describe the didactic principles in the high school as independent learning under supervision.

The aim of the high school education must be to see that the students leave at 18 as adult members of society and responsible citizens of a democratic community.

The authors list a number of sectors to which the high school could be directed:

- social service
- science and technology
- the commercial, ecohomic and administrative sector
- agriculture
- the literary and communications sector
- the arts

The authors of the memorandum think that a system would be suitable similar to the structure of what is now called 'participation education', i.e. learning while participating in adult life. There would thus be a number of independent high schools per region for one or more sectors with a common regional service centre and regional co-operation arrangements. The service centre would also house information services for the students. It would also make the necessary arrangements with industry and other authorities. These would concern, for example, training in industry and visits needed for learning while participating. Expensive equipment that would be used by schools jointly would also be housed in the centre.

At the moment the statesmen would prefer to see the high schools in the form of combined schools with three departments, i.e.:

- an academic department with a two-year course;
- a vocational department with a three to four-year course;
- a vocational department with a two to three-year course.

The departments would each run a number of courses with their own core syllabuses of which the nature and level is described. But within each course optional subjects at various levels and/or of various kinds may also be chosen. The courses in core and optional subjects would lead to the award of a comprehensive certificate which would have varying civil effects according to the course in question or its minimum requirements and to the optional subjects chosen.

As we have said, the authors of the memorandum would prefer to see the high schools with three streams. Only then, they believe, can easy transfer be promoted and canalisation be avoided. In this way the social divisions between different groups of 16 to 19 year olds can be counteracted.

In practice, it will not always be possible to offer all three streams in one high school. They therefore propose a minimum of two streams. If these are the two vocational streams, arrangements should be made for co-operation with a high school in the same sector containing an academic stream. Some such arrangement is necessary in order to ensure easy transfer between the departments.

Higher education

Higher education is concerned with students aged over 18. It is no longer exclusively for students who are continuing their studies immediately after leaving high school. Mature students will also be admitted. They will include those who are alternating work with study and those who wish to make up later for the chances of higher education they missed earlier.

The statesmen believe that in principle everyone should be admitted to higher education who wants it and is suited for it. But they add that not everyone can take part in higher education where, how, and for as long as he will. Higher education must offer a great variety of courses.

A successful university career no longer guarantees a prominent position in society. A fixed relationship between graduating and employment will become increasingly less common. The labour market for graduates will no longer be a closed shop of suitable work, possessing scarcity value and therefore highly paid.

If selection based on prognosis and drawing lots offer no permanent solution, the only thing remaining is selection on the grounds of separately required and proved achievements.

The present segregation in the Netherlands of university education (w.o.) and higher vocational education (h.b.o.) must be dispensed with. This can be done in two ways:

1. by seeking co-ordination between w.o. and h.b.o. in a link between courses rather than in formal contacts between institutions;
2. by refusing to accept the absence of coordination in the matter of facilities.

Distinction according to curricula

The heart of the proposal in the memorandum is that students should be able to transfer in either direction and at any time during their courses, based on the arrangement of w.o. and h.b.o. side by side, in the place of the one being subordinate to the other. This means that the primary distinction according to institution will be replaced by a primary distinction according to course. Looked at in the long term, higher education will have to offer a large number of courses: general education courses in addition to vocational training courses, courses for teaching skills in addition to methodologically oriented courses, courses drawn up individually in addition to standardised and collective courses.

Setting this pattern against various fields of learning, the statesmen see five kinds of courses for the future: research courses; training courses for which university training is required; training courses for which this is not the case; general educational courses in which methodology has pride of place and courses in which general and specific practical skills are taught.

The courses of the five kinds will then be filled in with the subject matter of one or more disciplines.

The statesmen do not feel that it is an obvious step to endeavour to integrate the universities and higher vocational education institutes. They feel it is better to reform each sector by itself. The guiding principle must be to increase the variety. This has proved to be possible only on a limited scale within the existing institutes, and they consider that this will remain so in the future. They therefore put forward a proposal to introduce a new kind of higher education institute in addition to the universities.

The principal feature of the new type of higher education will be a very large variety of courses. This means that university type and higher vocational type courses must be offered side by side. A well thought out policy regarding facilities must ensure that the new institutes are made attractive. They will accommodate principally courses which have at present been insufficiently developed. The new higher education institutes will form the growth sector par excellence and they must widen the objectives of higher education.

These proposals will be elaborated in a policy memorandum on higher education to be issued shortly.

Open school

The final component of the new education structure is the open school, the organisation which will co-ordinate all facilities for further training and education after completion of a conventional education, and will offer some of them itself.

Everyone must be able to continue to learn throughout his life and to reorientate himself through training, study, discussion and reflection. Educational facilities are needed for this; facilities accessible to everyone and which will thus be suitably distributed and tailored to the needs and situations in the life and work of all adults living in the Netherlands. There is to be an open school in order to guarantee that these facilities are offered systematically. A system of suitable educational and other facilities will be provided as an alternative for young people on reaching school-leaving age: this is called the second road to education. It will have to be linked as closely as possible to the practical experience of the participants in their jobs and professions.

Educational leave

It must be possible to convert what has been learned in this way into credits counting towards examinations. Suitable arrangements for educational leave will have to be designed for this group of students, so that they can get compensation for part of their study time. Where necessary curricula will have to be spread over a longer time than in comparable courses of full-time education. The maximum length of time for which anyone may be registered for further education courses will have to be extended for these participants.

In short, better conditions must be created in the long run in order to achieve a suitable system of educational facilities for adults.

The open school committee will issue recommendations on the subject. In addition, two other committees will be consulted. These are the Committee for the Promotion of Local Educational Networks, which will advise on the infrastructure of educational facilities for adults in this country, and an Educational Leave Committee which will concern itself with arrangements for granting time off for study purposes for people in employment.

Among the features of future adult education will be:

- optimal accessibility, through the mass media and the network of educational centres, for example;

- integrated education and training, based on learning by experience;
- openness of admission, curricula and graduation, with options such as single subject certificates and courses not leading to a qualification;
- a systematic series of courses, for which the open school will be responsible.

Educational centres

As we have seen, a network of educational centres will be needed. The centres must see that opportunities for further education are offered all over the country in addition to and following up conventional education. But not only that. The centres will also encourage processes of renewal in their regions. At present the idea is to make use of the facilities in the existing educational infrastructure, such as schools neighbourhood centres and club houses, educational institutes, libraries, and associations having educational activities. These centres - which will probably serve an area with 250,000 to 300,000 inhabitants each (the population of the Netherlands is 13,000,000) - will form the headquarters of work for an integral educational policy for adults at local or regional level.

The school as a community

The school cannot and must not be a closed system, administratively or in any other way, say the statesmen. 'The interest of the national community, and also of local communities, especially in private education, goes further than the immediate involvement of those who work and live in the school.'

They urge a sound communication structure in the school. The influence of pupils on the teaching and learning process and their involvement and co-determination in the teaching arrangements should automatically be part of the school work plan and of the school organisation. Two factors play a part here, i.e. the age of the pupils and the nature of the teaching and learning process.

The influence of pupils at primary school and the first few years in the middle school will be mainly felt in the choice and planning of many creative and recreational activities.

Older pupils will have to be given more opportunities of making choices with regard to the content of courses and the methods used in teaching. They must also be given a chance to have a say in the way the school is run, of involvement in the appointment of staff and of their own responsibility for the arrangements for many pupil-oriented school activities.

The authors of the memorandum urge the institution of a student council in each school. The council should be consulted when decisions have to be made about the supervision of students, equipment, the appointment of staff and the choice of material.

Teacher's aide

Teachers will also have to acquire a greater influence on what goes on in the schools.

'In the interests both of teachers and of the school and the teaching itself, some sort of specialisation will have to be arranged within the school on the basis of the school work plan.'

The statesmen feel that it is quite possible to arrange for some of the present duties of the teachers, both in the teaching process itself and in the supervision of pupils and in organisational activities, for instance, to be taken over by teachers' aides.

These members of staff would be responsible to the teachers and their job would be to support them.

'The teacher's aide as an institution is as yet not extensively used in Dutch education, but in our opinion it merits much attention in the years to come, partly from the point of view of efficiency.'

The authors of the memorandum also suggest that the teachers should be represented in the competent authority of the school and that a teachers' council should be installed. The duties of the council would be to arrange for the acquisition of material within a certain budget, and to decide on methods of assessment and on teaching methods. The teachers' council should also be involved or consulted in decisions on appointments and the layout of the school building.

The statesmen reject any form of complete self-government by teachers and pupils together. The reason they give for this is that it would not do justice to the general social function which the school has.

They believe that parents and teachers should sit on school boards, but also non-teaching staff, students over the age of 18 and representatives of the community or those parts of the community for which the school operates.

In more concrete terms, they have in mind a school board half of whose members would be representatives of the latter category, and the other half people from the first four categories.

Parent participation

The statesmen consider three forms of participation to be important. The first consists of activities by parents in the school which are not directly connected with teaching. As an example they

mention help with the internal arrangement of the school building, where parents could work together with teachers and pupils.

The second form of participation concerns activities which are directly in support of teaching. This could consist of parents and children discussing neighbourhood problems in school.

The third form of participation concerns activities in the lessons given to their children. They would supervise some of the activities in the lessons under the responsibility of teacher. 'The foundations of parent participation are laid in the nursery school. Any educational retardation due to social conditions must be overcome there.'

Learning to teach

In the memorandum the statesmen launch a number of ideas on teacher training. There will have to be a new training course for all primary school teachers instead of the present separate courses for nursery school teachers and primary school teachers. The courses could have a choice of two specialisms, one for young children from 4 to 8 years of age and one for children from 8 to 12 years of age.

Both men and women could choose either of the two courses. There would also be a training course for middle school teachers. This course would also lead to qualifications for teachers in the practical streams of the high school. The course would be developed from the present new non-university teacher training courses. Finally there would be teacher training courses qualifying teachers for the two-year academic stream of the high school and for certain sectors of higher education. This course would also train teachers for the more advanced practical stream in the high school. Graduates from this course could also be appointed to middle schools to teach some homogeneous groups of pupils of a fairly high level of abstraction in the final and possibly the penultimate year. The training course would consist of teaching options emerging from the restructuring and reprogramming of university education in the various disciplines and a number of top level training courses in non-university subjects.

Costs and efficiency

The raising of the school-leaving age to 18 years from 1 January 1985 is estimated to bring with it an increase in expenditure of about 350 million guilders in 1985 and about 300 to 350 million guilders in 2000. These figures have been arrived at on the basis of the present level of expenditure; the loss of income from school fees has been allowed for.

The autonomous increase in the number of pupils in 1985 will already require an increase in expenditure of about 1,050 million guilders compared with 1975. No allowance has been made in these figures for capital investment in buildings and equipment.

The Minister and State Secretaries of Education and Science remark in the memorandum that it is not possible to give even a rough estimate of the effect that the introduction of the proposals contained in the memorandum might have on educational costs and educational expenditure.

Government expenditure on education has increased in the past fifteen years from 2,000 million guilders to 14,200 million guilders, while it is expected that expenditure will rise to 18,000 million guilders by the year 1978. The Ministry of Education and Science has been responsible for a steadily increasing part of this total expenditure: 71 per cent in 1960, 85 per cent (and perhaps even more) in 1975. The government is spending 1,320 guilders per head of the population in 1975. This figure was 175 guilders in 1960. The memorandum shows that the share of nursery and primary education and of general secondary education in total expenditure has clearly dropped between 1960 and 1971.

The share of vocational education, on the other hand, and that of university education in particular, has increased. This is a shift of emphasis which has pushed up expenditure.

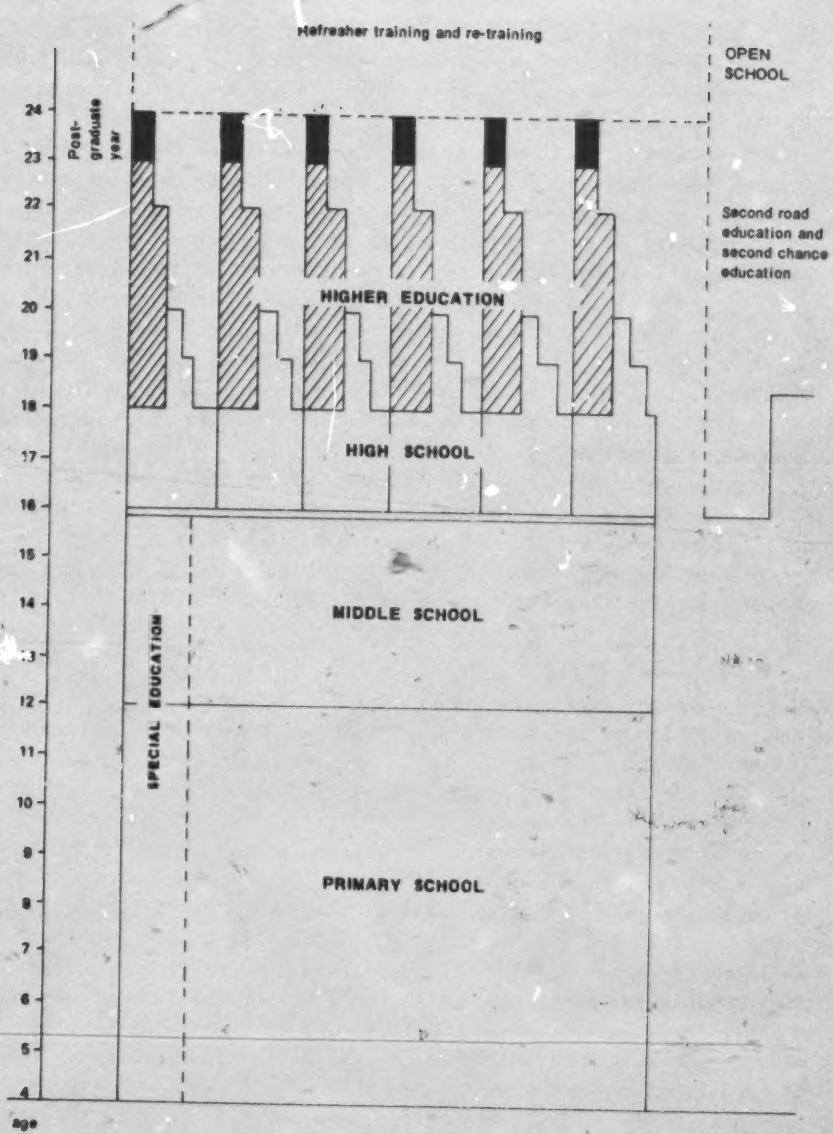
Education and science's share in the total national budget has increased in the past 15 years from 14 per cent to 25 per cent.

Dependence on population changes

Population forecasts made by the Central Statistical Office put the population of the Netherlands at 16,000,000 in the year 2000 (higher alternative) or 15.4 million (lower alternative).

The age group from 0 to 29 years is the most important from the point of view of education.

If the higher alternative is adhered to, the category of 0 to 14 year olds will increase. But the pressure on the budget margin for education will first be eased further until the eighties, according to an analysis per relevant age group. After that there will be an increase that will reach its zenith in about 1990. From that time onwards the school population will be, in the case of the higher alternative, about at the 1975 level. If this materialises, no budget margin will be formed on average in the coming 25 years with regard to education for children of compulsory school age. Moreover the pressure on educational expenditure will increase very much due to the rise in the number of 16 to 19 year olds in the year 1990.


Refresher training and re-training
OPEN SCHOOL
Post-graduate year
Second road education and second chance education
HIGHER EDUCATION
HIGH SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL
SPECIAL EDUCATION
PRIMARY SCHOOL
24
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age

In the case of the lower alternative, the autonomous costs of education would drop very considerably in the years to come as a result of a sharp drop in the number of children of compulsory school age. The drop will be modified in the coming 10 years due to the fact that in this period the number of young people in the 15 to 24 age group will in any case increase.

Increasing interest

In addition to the autonomous growth of the population which has a clear effect on participation in education, notably that of children of compulsory school age, there is another factor which influences participation in education to a high degree, and that is interest in education. In 1972, 98.8 per cent of 5 to 9 year olds were attending school full time, as against 97.9 per cent in 1962.

In 1972, 99.4 per cent of 10 to 14 year olds were attending school full time, as against 95.5 per cent in 1962.

The popularity of part-time education during the day among this age group dropped from 0.7 per cent in 1962 to 0.1 per cent in 1972. Of the 15 to 19 year olds, 48.9 per cent were attending school full time in 1972 as against 32.6 per cent in 1962. The popularity of part-time education during the day among this age group dropped from 14 per cent in 1962 to 12.7 per cent in 1972.

Of the 20 to 24 age group 9.9 per cent were in full-time education in 1972 as against 5.7 per cent in 1962. The figures for part-time education during the day were 5.6 per cent in 1972 and 6.2 per cent in 1962.

Of the 25 to 29 year olds, 3.3 per cent were in full-time education in 1972 as against 2.4 per cent in 1968. The figures for part-time education during the day were 3.3 per cent in 1972 as against 2.3 per cent in 1968.

The memorandum also shows that a relative drop can be observed since 1960 in the popularity of (v.w.o.),(h.a.v.o.) and (m.a.v.o.), and of junior secondary vocational education. This is counterbalanced by a clear relative increase in the popularity of senior secondary vocational education, higher vocational education and university education: a shift from relatively inexpensive courses to relatively more costly ones. Experience abroad leads the statesmen to believe 'firmly' that the popularity of secondary and higher education will increase still further in the years to come. Participation in higher education, expressed as a percentage of the total number of 19 to 24 year olds, is at present about 15. If the percentage were to rise to 30, that would mean an increase in expenditure between 1975 and 1985 of about 4 thousand million guilders and in 2000, 3 to 4 thousand million guilders, depending on whether the higher or lower alternative works out. If the percentage of participants were to rise to 40,

this would mean an increase in expenditure in 1985 of about 6.5 thousand million guilders and in 2000 of either about 7 thousand million guilders or about 5.5 thousand million guilders.

More balanced use of educational facilities

In order to avoid a disproportionctely large part of the available funds being spent on relatively expensive educational facilities for the relatively few, at the cost of the development and/or improvement of educational facilities for all, limits will have to be set to the participation in higher education.

In any event, the restriction of the length of time students are allowed to be registered and the length of time they are allowed to stay in all forms of higher education institutes and in the high schools must be the rule, say the authors. There would also have to be some limit to admissions to higher education establishments.

The statesmen do not consider it wholly out of the question that restricted admission to all disciplines in higher education will be needed in the future. The alternative would be further study by means of cheaper forms of multi-media education. Efforts must also be made to see that the accommodation is used for other purposes in the evenings, weekends and holidays.

Measures to limit admissions will have to be applied with considerable caution. This means that the places needed will have to be found by lowering the average cost per pupil per year.

By far the largest part of the costs are staff costs, and a substantial reduction of these will have to be achieved by reducing the staff-student ratio. It will be necessary in the future to bring about a considerable reduction in teaching density in secondary schools by applying educational technology, and leaving more to the initiative of the older pupils.

No school fees for children of compulsory school age

It is considered reasonable to charge fees even in the future to those who obtain a demonstrable economic advantage from education.

The Minister and State Secretaries feel however that there can be no question of fees for children of compulsory school age.

Moreover, the system of charging fees must be such that it is no obstacle to the participation of studerts from certain income groups.

Part Two

EXAMINERS' REPORT AND QUESTIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

The educational system of the Netherlands is one of considerable complexity. This is, of course, true of other countries, but the emphasis placed on guaranteeing freedom of education in the Constitution, the rights and duties given to parents there, and the extension of denominational schools have all given that complexity a very unusual character. It is obvious, therefore, that the brevity of the visit prevented the examining team from undertaking a fundamental study of the whole of Dutch education.(1) Instead we have concentrated on certain major issues which have emerged as most important both in the Contours Memorandum itself and in the subsequent discussions in The Hague.

We would like to say at the outset that we believe the Memorandum to be a major statement of possibilities, and we would like to congratulate the Minister and all his colleagues on their willingness to think aloud in this way. It is our view that the present era of participation and consultation requires such examples of open government. But, of course, it is specially appropriate for the Netherlands with its tradition of democracy and freedom in education. If we ourselves are critical of some parts of the Memorandum, that is simply because the document merits serious consideration and was published with the intention of stimulating such a response.

The Contours Memorandum is a statement of educational analysis, policy and philosophy. It has great significance for the Netherlands, but its publication is also a significant European educational event. Much of its content has been influenced by experience in many other countries, and it is likely that the Dutch proposals and reforms will themselves feed back to those countries. While, therefore, our comments and criticisms are put forward primarily to assist the Dutch themselves, we are aware that our audience and clientèle, so to speak, extends more broadly throughout OECD.

We would like to say that we approve very strongly of an attempt to look at an educational system as a whole, and to set a long-term perspective within which individual decisions can be taken, a

1) As its foreword stressed, the Contours Memorandum is a discussion memorandum. It asks for comments by 1st August, 1976, and for this reason it was judged preferable to carry out the OECD review in time for it to contribute to the subsequent reformulation.

perspective rarely adopted in other official policy documents. This is not to confuse the broad exposition of developments, objectives, and reforms with the detailed plans (let alone the day-to-day decisions) that have yet to be made. We fully understand the unreality and other disadvantages of an attempt to base everything on a rigid plan. But the Contours Memorandum does not make that mistake, nor the other and more usual mistake of concentrating solely on marginal variations with no concern for their system consequences. It is a framework, both for action and discussion, and a most flexible one at that, and we feel bound to express our support for it, and to recommend it as an approach from which other nations, mutatis mutandis, could benefit.

We would also like to thank all the Ministers and officials we have met in the Netherlands for the help they have given us, both for the additional documentation they provided, and for their frank and full replies to our questions. If some of these questions were based more on ignorance than full information we apologise but again must explain that no outsider can appreciate the full subtleties of an operating system. At the same time the outsider has the advantage that he takes nothing for granted, which is, of course, the chief point of a visit such as ours.

Another preliminary remark which we feel it necessary to make, concerns the pervasive nature of certain educational problems in all OECD countries. It is no disrespect to the Dutch to say that such problems appear in their country, and are not yet solved, for they are not solved elsewhere either. Such issues as dropping out, lack of motivation, selection by social class in grammar schools, low participation of poor children in higher education, social relevance of the curriculum, the correct school leaving age, the nature and costs of recurrent education, are common to us all.

Although countries differ in their degrees of success, no country has overcome all of these difficulties or even any single one of them in its entirety. The great merit of the Contours Memorandum lies in its willingness to face up explicitly to so many questions and their interrelationship. But it cannot be taken for granted that answers will be found so easily, or that all problems can or should be solved simultaneously. What can be agreed is that each problem requires careful and detailed study, and that each individual educational reform must be placed in the context of the system as a whole, and must be thought of in relation to other reforms. Equally, it is our view that progress in education is not an autonomous process or happens by chance. Active policy making is required, based on broad plans with a very long time horizon.

It will be recalled that in the earlier, 1969 OECD report on Education in the Netherlands, the following conclusions were reached:

i) that the role of planning in education decision-making be increased;
ii) that there should be greater flexibility within secondary schools and that hierarchical divisions be removed;
iii) that primary education be reoriented to help all social groups prepare for later education;
iv) that secondary and higher education be reformed to serve the needs of all classes of students;
v) that the universities take a more active, extensive and integrated role in the education system; and
vi) that planning, research, and innovation in its various forms be reorganised and developed to meet more exactly and effectively the needs of the educational process.

The Contours Memorandum may be interpreted as a positive response to these recommendations. In some cases, definite action has already been taken, as in the setting up of committees of innovation and research and in the publication of reports such as that issued in 1975 entitled "Towards a Structure for the Planning of Primary and Secondary Education". In other cases we remain in the area of theory and experiment from which institutional change will no doubt follow in due course. One has only to compare the embryonic outline for a new upper secondary school with the proposals for the reform of higher education to see that different parts of the Contours Memorandum are at very different stages of development. It is worth emphasising, however, to those who are concerned with the undue speed which they think is implied in the Memorandum, that it is already seven years since the previous OECD report and on the fastest schedule it will be quite a few years more before there will be major changes in the structure of schooling in the Netherlands.

As a last introductory comment, we must say that it is not our wish to enter into controversy concerning the role of the denominational schools in the Netherlands. Many of the representatives of the denominations, while not totally opposed to the Contours plan and while no doubt recognising that the future of their schools depends on their success in adapting to the needs of a modern society, have expressed fears concerning the possibility that it will infringe religious freedom. They have not been able to cite examples, and the Contours Memorandum itself says clearly that it does not have the intention of going against this fundamental aspect of the Dutch constitution. Nevertheless, we are obliged to mention the evidence given to us of a general sense of worry about the unforeseen consequences of major change, and, since the success of the middle

school reform, in particular, depends on full co-operation and participation of all people, it is our hope that every opportunity will be taken to reassure the leaders of the various denominations that their rights will not be reduced. At the same time we hope that there will also be a positive response on their side to join in the experimentation and smooth the transition to the new system, as and when it commands the support of the Dutch people.

II. BASIC EDUCATION

The primary school

Concerning the primary school we would wish to say at the outset that we favour the reforms proposed, and although here as elsewhere it seems reasonable to carry out a number of experiments, there is no reason why the actual changes should be unduly delayed. The benefits of variability in the age of transfer from nursery type education to the primary school proper, and of the greater attention that can be paid to the different characteristics of individual children and to the needs of children from the lower classes, are so apparent that it would be a pity not to try and provide them as quickly as possible, all the more so in view of the interest in several countries in the problem of a coherent transition between pre-school and primary school, as regards both curricular and pedagogical concerns.

An additional consideration is that in none of our evidence did we find an explicit rejection of the chief proposals for this sector. There were doubts concerning matters of detail, and here as elsewhere there were worries about denominational rights, but the overall impression was one of welcome. We note all the complications set out in paragraph 6, Chapter I, Part II,(1) and agree that they must be taken seriously. Transition from one system to another is always difficult, and it would be wise to avoid as many of the likely dangers as possible. To be set against this is the point that detailed planning, if it is to take place realistically, requires definite objectives and a definite time scale. We would ask, therefore, whether in addition to the timetable set by the Innovation Committee for Basic School for the experiments, it would not be right to provide as precise a timetable as possible within which the change can occur, emphasising, in particular, the year in which the basic transformation is intended to take place. The Memorandum says - rightly, we believe - that "The above problem can only be solved if close cooperation is achieved between parents, school boards, school heads and teachers, teachers' organisations, the government and the experts."

1) Unless otherwise stated, the Chapters, Parts and pages referred to in this report are those of the memorandum "Contours of a future education system", Ministry of Education and Science, The Hague, June 1975.

We would only add that such co-operation would be facilitated by clarifying the time scale which the Minister has in mind.

Our own detailed comments are few, but we think important. Chief among them is an anxiety about the age at which formal literary skills are developed. We may have misunderstood the Memorandum, but we would like to emphasise the undesirability of too early a start to reading and, in particular, writing. We would, therefore, ask the Minister to clarify his views on this subject, and would ask whether he does not agree that there is a genuine danger here of premature involvement with these things to the detriment of the more general development of the child. There is also a danger that what might be called the social structure of the nursery classes will be damaged thereby.

Related to this is our concern with the age at which such social techniques as oral expression should be taught. Here the advantage surely lies the other way, and that especially as the child from a disadvantaged home gains from as early as possible an acquaintance with these and similar social skills. More generally, we would hope that the experimental projects will pay considerable attention to the home-school relationship, and that the school will see how important it is for them to pay attention to it throughout the child's stay with them. This is not something to be looked at solely in connection with the difficulty of the under-achieving child, nor should it be thought about only when the difficulties and lack of achievement occur.

May we also refer at this point to sex discrimination in education. We discuss this further on page 50 but we must stress that if the Dutch government wishes to pursue vigorously a policy of reduction of sexual discrimination, it is not too soon to start this in the nursery classes where, even if participation is equal, sexual differentiation and sex-typing is still to be minimised.

The middle school

Turning now to the middle school, here too we feel able to add our broad support to what is being proposed, and especially to the principles that are set out in Chapter III. Whether it be a desire to promote social cohesiveness or to allow each individual child to develop his or her potential to the full, we are convinced that these and similar aims can best be promoted within a comprehensive school. Selection by academic ability and consequent exclusion from certain courses (which in practice also means selection by social class) should, if it takes place at all, occur as late as possible.

Of course, not all of the evidence we received supported these propositions. There were some who felt that the existing grammar schools were so good that nothing should be allowed to change them.

Others were happy to have witnessed the postponement of the age of selection, but did not wish it to be as late as 16. It was suggested that the main criterion should be preparation for higher education, and that nothing should be done to endanger that.

There were fears expressed, not only by defendants of the grammar schools, that the references to the curriculum in Chapter III would lead to undue interference with the rights of the denominational schools or would strengthen the central government relative to the municipalities. Such objectives as the desirability of education promoting social awareness and assisting the individual in his social role, particularly as a participant in the decision making at all levels, were thought to have an undesirable ideological content.

To be set against this, the body of the evidence, we are bound to say, points the other way. We were told about the need for more rapid and definite decisions so that the new reforms could go ahead as soon as possible. We were reminded that the ideas underlying the middle school were not at all new, and that in the Netherlands as elsewhere there had been discussion of them for many years. Criticism was expressed that the Contours Memorandum said too little rather than too much on curriculum content. It was pointed out that far from the comprehensive principle being socialist, it appealed to conservative instincts, and in many countries had been supported by parties of many different political persuasions. Finally, there were those who thought that in the new social atmosphere in which "all children of one school year regardless of their bent, home background, sex or learning achievements receive general and vocational teaching together", academic standards, far from falling, would actually rise.

It seems to us that the Memorandum steers a wise course between these extremes. The balance of the argument, coupled with extensive experience both in the Netherlands but even more in other countries, leads inevitably to the acceptance of the middle school in principle. The issues are those of timing and method. It is for this reason that the experiments on how to do the job ought to be encouraged. They will show how the reforms can be introduced, indicate that there will be a range of possible types of middle school, and, above all, they will throw up and elucidate the unforeseen consequences which are so typical of social change in general. The place of experimentation in the Contours Memorandum is of particular interest and we discuss it specifically later on in Section VI of our report. But as experimentation is especially prominent in the proposals for the middle school, we intersperse our further comments on this area with observations which have a more general application to the planning and execution of experiments and their validation.

A matter of some importance both in the experimental phase and eventually when the system is stabilised again is that care is taken to see that the different parts fit together satisfactorily. This is especially significant for the relationship between the middle school and the upper secondary school. It is obvious that the middle school will be unable to pursue a more general course of education devoted to personal and social development of its pupils if the upper school adopts a curriculum demanding greater academic specialisation as its starting point. At the same time the middle school must not go to such an extreme of broadening its curriculum that the upper secondary school is unable to proceed academically at all. We should add that, while we mention this point, it is not our view that this problem is insurmountable. International experience shows that a curriculum devoted to the needs of the individual pupil can accommodate both a valid academic foundation and an awareness of culture and society as is proposed for the middle school in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, this is not something that happens automatically, but it must be carefully planned, and both levels of school must be made aware of the other's problems and be willing to co-operate and compromise. We recognise that there are special difficulties in ensuring a reasonable articulation between the two sectors, stemming mainly from the fact that the middle school is already in an experimental phase, whereas the outlines of upper school are only briefly sketched. But this leads us to ask whether the Minister is satisfied that enough attention has been paid to possible problems which may arise from the transition between the middle school and the proposed high school.

In the experimental phase pupils in the middle schools will go on to conventional secondary education of various kinds. Since the intention of the experiments is partly to validate this reform in the context of a total reform of the system, pupils may temporarily be at a disadvantage in any of the existing kinds of secondary school. Although they may have gained personally, their academic or vocational background will be different from that of their fellows entering the same schools. We hope very much, therefore, that resources will be made available and great efforts will be made to help the children from the experimental schools re-enter the system. It is our view that such a re-entry can be made easily as long as teachers and counsellors are aware of potential difficulties and take the trouble to deal with them. We agree, in short, that the experiments need not place the individual pupil in educational danger. Quite the contrary, the experience will be highly beneficial if it is properly organised.

It is also important that all change, but especially that which takes place in the early stages, is carefully monitored. This will

enable the relevant experience to be shared, and the lessons learned to be available to all. The spirit of the Contours Memorandum is one of public debate. It will help educational advance if that discussion does not end when policy is turned into practice, but continues for many years thereafter.

Another general comment which may as well be made at this stage of the argument concerns the role of teachers in educational reform. All research shows how the teachers in their methods and their attitudes both embody the traditional system and are also capable of transforming it into something new. This is the case even when one is considering small and piecemeal reforms. It is true a fortiori when what is being contemplated is a major reform of all levels of education. Suffice it to say that the co-operation and active support of teachers is called for. Thus, the new middle school cannot succeed unless teachers believe that it is worthwhile. This entails the provision of adequate external support, and also the encouragement of teachers to act as innovators themselves.

It is important that they should be convinced of the value of what is being done, and, since they will bear the burden of the change, that they should be helped in all necessary ways. While many of them, of course, will have been the protagonists of educational advance, and, for example, will be eagerly looking forward to the introduction of comprehensive education in the middle school, others will be more doubtful. Neither group can be expected to operate the new system without careful preparation. This involves a programme of retraining and re-education of the teaching profession together with changes in the curriculum of the teacher training institutions which prepare new entrants to the profession. We understand that a memorandum on refresher training for teachers is currently under consideration, and would strongly suggest that new measures for such training should take full account of the proposed innovations.

While we favour the experiments that are being undertaken, we ought to say that we are not convinced that enough effort is being devoted to the curriculum, and we are worried that with so many bodies involved the effect will be too diffuse. There are advantages in not concentrating all the work in one body, especially those connected with obtaining a wide breadth of vision. There are also the special needs of the denominations to be taken into account. But, since the success of the middle school depends so much on curriculum reform (which goes hand in hand with teacher training and retraining), great care must be taken to see that this is not unduly delayed. We do not wish to advocate a greater strengthening of central control than is compatible with the Dutch Constitution, but someone must accept responsibility for the success of the operation, and see that

the whole operation is carried out satisfactorily. This responsibility must surely rest ultimately with central authorities. We would therefore ask whether the Minister envisages strengthening the support and impetus given to the development of curricula specifically designed for the new middle schools, and encouraging such development to take place as close to the schools as possible, for instance, within the local and regional educational advisory centres.

There are other aspects of the middle school which must be referred to. The change in curriculum and general outlook of the school seems to us to require more weight to be placed on the academic and vocational guidance of the individual pupil. The basis of teaching is seen to be one of internal differentiation whereby, "as far as possible, all pupils within a certain year or group are kept together and receive guidance according to their ability and pace, skill and interest". It is apparent that a great deal of experimentation and research needs to be undertaken to explore the possibilities here, but we agree that ultimately this approach is bound to be superior to one of streaming or even of setting. There is always the danger of reproducing a selective system within the comprehensive school by the introduction of rigid streaming. There are even dangers of setting by subjects if this is carried out inflexibly and is geared too much to the needs of the teacher and too little to those of the pupil.

But, while we favour what might be called the individualisation of the curriculum within the common social framework of the school, we must express the hope that this will always be flexible, and will not lead to a stereotyping of pupils. We wonder, therefore, whether even more research and experimental effort should not be devoted to this subject? In particular, there is a question of the correct balance between too early and too late a determination of the educational needs of the pupil. In the next section we express some doubts concerning the proposals for upper secondary education, but we are convinced that, whatever is decided there, the middle school curriculum must be regarded as an integral whole for the pupil, and not divided into two parts, post-primary and pre-upper secondary.

Special education

We have not said anything on Chapter II, Special Education. The reason is simply our support for what is said there. We are convinced that the basic principle should be the integration of the handicapped child within the normal school, and the modification of teacher training to take account of his or her presence. Central to the thinking of the admissions committees referred to in paragraph 3c. should be a presumption against the special school and in favour of finding a place in the normal school. Only in extreme cases should

the child be placed in special schools, and even then every effort must be made (as is said in paragraph 6) to bring the special school into close contact with the normal school. The report mentions the attitude of society to deviant behaviour. It is worth noting that it is only in comparatively recent times that physical handicap has been treated with sympathy and understanding, and there still remain those who would wish to treat children with "unattractive" physical disabilities in special institutions. There is, therefore, a major task of social persuasion and education to be undertaken which places a responsibility on all levels and sections of the community. All that can be said, however, is that this is a self-sustaining process. As the present generation of children become used to the presence of the handicapped in their midst in schools so they will regard that as the norm for their own children in the next generation.

School Administration

Our final comment in this section concerns the reform of school administration. A philosophy of democratisation within the educational process leading to greater democracy in society at large must not be contradicted by an undemocratic school administration. Thus, all interested and relevant bodies must be represented in the decision-making processes of all schools. By this we mean teachers, pupils, parents, and the community at large. Our own experience leads us to two important conclusions here. One is that there need be no fear of pupil representation based on inexperience and irresponsibility. Quite the contrary, schoolchildren do not tend to extremes of view about the administration of the school or show less responsibility than their elders. The second is that it is a mistake to identify the community interest with that of the parents whose children are attending the school at a particular point of time. Correctly interpreted the community includes parents of both past and future pupils, and even some who are not and never will be parents of children of the school, but nonetheless have an interest and appreciation of local matters. It was suggested to us that the ideal school administration would combine the best elements of both denominational and municipal schools, and we are bound to say that we see much sense in that.

III. EDUCATION AFTER THE AGE OF SIXTEEN

Raising the school leaving age

Although there are a great diversity of institutions involved and many different problems to be examined, we have considered it right to approach all education after the age of sixteen as a unity. This is for two reasons: it is here that the choice for more or less education is exercised, and it is after sixteen that the appropriate mix of vocational and general or theoretical study becomes of crucial significance.

This takes us back to the middle school curriculum and on to the extension of compulsory education to eighteen. We refer many times in this report to the controversies that have been placed before us, most of which, of course, we have seen before in many countries, not least our own. They are all quite typical of the educational problems that exist throughout all the OECD Member countries. What is more unusual is the proposal to raise the school leaving age to eighteen, and our evidence contains stronger opposition to this than to anything else in the Contours Memorandum. Quite clearly it has aroused considerable feeling in the Netherlands; what is more the objections do not come from one specific quarter. The proposals have been criticised by those who typically can be regarded as having progressive views as well as by others with a more traditional philosophy.

The concern has very simply to do with the need for compulsion as such. It is recognised that without compulsion it will be the groups most in need who will leave the system. This would be true whatever the school leaving age is decided to be, because the forces of social and economic inequality are immensely powerful and are not easily overcome. Children from working class homes in many cases see the costs of education in income forgone as too high, and the benefits in income eventually gained as too low. They and their parents have a not surprising tendency to concentrate on the pressing needs of the moment. Furthermore, despite the efforts of the past decade the curriculum is still geared mostly to middle class needs, interests, aspirations, and values. Working class children are not usually irrational when they play truant or when they reject optional education. The schools have failed to give them what they

want so they look for it elsewhere. Put bluntly, therefore, our conclusion is that the school leaving age should not be raised, particularly before suitable curricula are devised for all youngsters in the age groups concerned.

The length of compulsory education can of course not be fixed once and for all, but there are many arguments against the concentration of educational provision into a single period and in recent years the notion of recurrent education has gained many supporters. We have already touched upon one reason for such an approach. Another related reason is the more general psychological observation that many students - not only those from working class homes - feel a need to engage in working life and to assume some kind of responsibility for themselves. In such cases, a prolonged initial period of education can impair motivation for future study and create problems for the relationships between education and working life, and the community at large. Some of these problems derive from the difficulty encountered by the individual when the choice of study is often made 5-10 years before he or she enters the labour market. A structure of recurrent education would help solve this type of individual problem as well as the economic and social one of how to obtain a reasonable correspondence between the output from the education system and the demands of the labour market.

The spirit of some sections of the Contours Memorandum seems to us to tally well with the idea of recurrent education, for example the argument that higher education should no longer be exclusively for students who continue their studies immediately after high school but should also admit those with working experience. The notion of education by participation in the upper secondary school also conforms closely with the recurrent education approach. Yet we got the impression that in some of its interpretations recurrent education is incompatible with the philosophy of the Contours Memorandum, in that the proposed extension of initial education would render more difficult the achievement of a better balance between youth and adult education, and would also absorb resources which would be more effectively spent on expanding the opportunities for adults to return later to take up further studies. We would like to ask the Minister whether he does indeed perceive a certain tension arising on this score.

We have raised this question in connection with the extension of compulsory education. To avoid misunderstandings, it should be clear that what we have in mind is primarily recurrent study after the completion of upper secondary school. It ought to be the right of all young girls and boys to continue their studies immediately after the middle school and we believe that the majority will avail themselves of this right. Out of those who will not, several will

come back at a later stage but others may not come back at all if they are not helped by special measures, and our view is that the educational authorities should feel a firm responsibility to help the last group.

The upper secondary school

On certain matters we have already made our positions clear. We are convinced that the requirements of university entry should not be allowed to dominate the whole of the remainder of the system. Education is not only about academic achievement, especially in the narrow terms conceived by some university circles, and it is not to be restricted solely to the transmission of knowledge. This is not to go to the other extreme and deny totally the value of the scholarly curriculum. It is to say that educational achievement has many dimensions, to do with personal maturity, social awareness, aesthetic appreciation, and creative talent, and these are important even for the tiny minority of the population who will eventually spend their lives in scholarly pursuits.

Just as the universities must not be allowed to cast a dark shadow over all other schools and colleges so we also agree that the demands of the economy are not the only ones to be met. The appreciation of the value of education as such is not to be discounted.

We have supported the Contours Memorandum in giving priority to the comprehensive principle in the middle school. The conclusion follows that objectives and methods at 16+ should not be allowed to damage that principle. We feel obliged then to repeat a word of warning concerning entry to the upper secondary school. If this is dominated by academic selection, and if entry to a more academic "sixth form" is to be determined largely by test of achievement, there are bound to be distortions of the middle school curriculum. Most countries have found that no matter what is laid down formally, in practice the competitive process of selection becomes the dominant factor. Thus, we feel that, while the students' progress should be carefully monitored and they should be given all manner of informed advice and guidance, ultimately they should be free to make a decision on the post-sixteen curriculum themselves.

It is for this reason that we are obliged to express some doubts about the proposals in the Contours Memorandum on the upper secondary school. We believe that the best approach is still to unite the vocational and the general streams within the same institution, not implying that one is intrinsically more valuable than the other, and attempting to retain an element of both in each pupil's course of study. To shape the upper secondary school along these lines follows logically from the principles of the middle school. It also concurs well with the idea of recurrent education, by permitting a real

choice between work and continued study, with every stream preparing pupils for both options. We look forward to the Minister's reaction to this approach.

Higher education

The view that we have expressed on the upper secondary school automatically leads us to some questions on the future development of higher education in the Netherlands.

After the publication of the Contours Memorandum, thinking on higher education has developed considerably. In December 1975 the Minister submitted to the Second Chamber a memorandum entitled "Higher Education in the Future: possible Development in the Long Term and Initiatives in the Coming Years". The document is intended to propose short-term policy measures and to raise for discussion long-term issues.

Very briefly, the essential issues are the present sharp division between universities and higher vocational education establishments, the long duration of university courses (6 to 9 years) and the great demand for higher education. The financial pressures are evident. The proportion of the education budget devoted to higher education rose from 11.7 per cent in 1950 to 25 per cent in 1974, and the share in the GDP of public expenditure on higher education grew in the Netherlands by a factor of 2.2 between 1963 and 1970, compared with the equivalent mean of 1.8 for most OECD countries.(1) The document itself projects a rise in expenditure on higher education from 4.1 milliard guilders to 11.1 milliard in 1995, of from 2.01 per cent of GNP to 3.03 per cent, if current trends were to continue.

The reform of this sector is planned in several stages. In the first stage higher vocational education will be expanded and strengthened. Small vocational institutes will be grouped together and later on merged into larger establishments to be regarded as equivalent to universities. There will be better arrangements for transfers in both directions between universities and higher vocational establishments, and finally one single system of higher education will be created with no institutionalised distinction between universities and other establishments for higher education.

As far as finance is concerned, the document recognises that the strengthening of higher vocational education requires extra money, and proposes that this should be derived, initially, from a transfer from the university sector. In general four measures are proposed, with estimates for the savings they will allow as a percentage of GNP: the encouragement of participation in the

1) See Public Expenditure on Education: OECD, Paris, 1976.

non-university sector (0.51 per cent), the limitation of intake into expensive university courses (0.50 per cent), an increase in the proportion of part-time students (0.39 per cent) and a reduction in unit costs (0.31 per cent). The maximum saving estimated from a permutation of these four factors is 1.10 per cent of GNP, which would reduce the share of higher education to 1.93 per cent below its current level.

Our discussions have convinced us that there is an urgent need for a reform of higher education in the Netherlands. It is, for instance, obvious that too much time and money are spent on university education. Not only, therefore, are the short-term measures in our opinion highly relevant; the long-term policy which aims at a unified but diverse and flexible higher education system has also gained our full support. Such a system is a necessary condition for meeting the needs of new groups - and here we are not thinking primarily in quantitative terms. An upper secondary education which prepares the students for both work and further studies calls for a much broader concept of higher education than the traditional one, involving a more flexible approach to entry into and exit from this sector. The Dutch authorities are standing in the front line when it comes to educational thinking on these issues.

On one crucial point, however, this thinking has not yet led to any concrete results: the transition from upper secondary education to higher education. Even in the first stage of the reform work this constitutes an urgent problem, but the Memorandum does not suggest any fully-fledged solution to the question of selection to courses with restricted admission. It is doubtful whether the introduction of the propaedeutic year will be adequate.

We would very much like to know the Minister's view on the connection between the upper secondary and the higher education sectors as regards both the relation between the different programmes offered in the two sectors and the admission requirements and selection procedure to higher education. Let us just say that we believe that the recurrent education approach could contribute to the solution of this problem as well.

The Open School

We have already mentioned certain features of the Contours Memorandum which seem to us to be in line with the concept of recurrent education. The Open School is another proposal which may be regarded as the beginning of a venture in the right direction. We must admit that a difficulty of interpretation arises here as to whether the Open School is to be regarded as an institution in the ordinary sense of the word (in that it is directly involved, in its experiments, in serving three target groups), or as a way of

organising other institutions. The Contours Memorandum refers to it as "the coping stone of the new educational structure", and as an "organisational structure", but also says it "will provide some facilities itself". We ourselves prefer to interpret it as an approach or "a way of thinking" and also as an organisation, which is in line with the Memorandum (Part III, Chapter III, paragraph 10), but we would probably give the former idea more weight than the latter.

Naturally enough, the Open School must pay attention to the needs of the disadvantaged. It is surely right to aim to help such target groups as women who have completed one or two years at most of secondary domestic science education and old workers who have similarly lost out in the education process. It is to be hoped that such relevant bodies as the trade unions and women's organisations will provide necessary support. We were glad to be reassured by our witnesses on this, and would welcome further encouragement to such bodies to make positive contributions.

Another point made to us in evidence was that the Open School while providing general education should not make the same mistake as has occurred elsewhere of concentrating solely or mainly on meeting a middle class demand. It should be based as much as possible on the needs of ordinary people, and should encourage them to participate in the decision-making process. This is likely to be much more satisfactory than a more paternalistic approach separating the consumption of education from its provision. It follows that the Open School should work as close as possible to the home and to the place of work, and while it helps the disadvantaged it can also help the advantaged.

The system of education, even up to eighteen years of age (were that to become the compulsory limit for regular schooling), will always fail to cover some needs. Thus, remedial work and second chance education must be seen as a permanent need to be catered for. But the Open School must be more than that. Although a return to schooling and even to higher education will appear for many adults as second chances, there is no reason not to regard them as normal, but delayed, first chances. We would ask the Minister, therefore, to consider how much farther he is willing to go in this direction, and whether ultimately he feels that the Open School as he conceives it will become both a normal experience for the people of the Netherlands, and the means of providing permanent access to additional education for particular groups whose needs cannot be met within the ordinary system.

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Integration and Co-ordination at national and local levels

The organisational emphasis of the Open School encourages us to stress the need for those responsible for policy to bear in mind the interrelationships between all parts of the education system. In principle, adult education in all its forms and what might be termed normal education should be integrated. For ourselves, we would really want to regard recurrent education as the correct organisational approach to education after the age of sixteen, and to argue that ultimately it should incorporate all types of further and higher education, without leaving the universities or the folk high schools out of consideration. Similarly, while we agree that there should be a good deal more debate on such controversial topics as the correct mixture of general education and training, of public versus private provision, of education for credit or a more liberal arts approach, and of full versus part-time, the institutional and organisational outcome need not depend in an essential way on the conclusions arrived at.

One phenomenon we have noticed is the number of Ministers that have some degree of responsibility for something that comes within the general heading of Recurrent Education. This, together with a great proliferation of committees of all kinds, leads us to worry about whether the essence of the new policy will somehow become lost between all of them. Thus, with adult education in the Ministry of Culture; evening schools and educational centres for young workers at the Ministry of Education; vocational training for farming at the Ministry of Agriculture; occupational training for business and trade union education at the Ministry of Social Affairs; training in connection with the issue of retail licences at the Ministry of Economic Affairs, and some vocational training at the Defence Ministry, there is a clear need for coordination and integration of policies. It seems to us, therefore, that the Open School should also be regarded as an experiment in inter-departmental co-operation (with, of course, the Ministry of Education assuming the lead in this case). This co-operation should be envisaged as including education, training and manpower policies.

Analogous to this there would be experiments in local co-operation aimed above all at the reduction in conflict between the many organisations actually working in the field. In this connection we would underline the importance of the Education Networks Committee, and the need to encourage as much local initiative and co-operation as possible. In this area, above all, success depends on participation and on meeting local needs on both the vocational and professional sides and with respect to general education. We welcome the fact that the Ministry of Social Affairs has participated in the

Committee for Local Education Networks from the beginning, and would express the hope that this Committee will continue to co-operate closely not only with the Open School Committee but also with the Committee on Educational Leave which is shortly to be appointed.

IV. THE RELATION BETWEEN THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

There has been no more striking contrast presented to us than the opposing views on the relationship between education and the demands of the economy expressed through the labour market. The Contours Memorandum itself suggests that there has been an over-emphasis on the objective of meeting society's needs for skilled manpower and proposes instead to give greater weight to preparation for social life and the development of the individual personality. But some witnesses took the exactly opposite view that there were great dangers stemming from an excess supply of people with the wrong skills, and that, in particular, from the economic point of view, the population might become seriously over-educated.

Of course, the Contours Memorandum is aware of "the difficulty of matching the supply of manpower produced by the schools to the demand on the labour market". (At least one witness told us that economic arguments of cost and manpower had unduly influenced the Memorandum.) It may be said, therefore, that the real points at issue are assessments of the magnitude of the problem and the alternative methods of dealing with it.

On the former it is right to point out that until recently the economy has been able to cope relatively easily with the increase in the education of the labour force, having been itself an important motive force behind that expansion. Nobody doubts that the typical worker has received an education much greater both in quantity and quality than his predecessor, and this has not reduced his employability. The education content of most occupations, so to speak, has risen showing that it is certainly within the bounds of the possible to raise the standards of education.

Reference may also be made to the wide differences in education in various other advanced industrial countries. They have all experienced an educational explosion far in excess at least of what the pessimists thought possible or desirable two decades ago. (It is worth remarking, incidentally, that fears concerning excess supply of educated manpower are not at all new, but stretch back fifty years or more.) Similarly, they are all worried about their economies today and these worries are transferred to the schools and

universities. What is important to bear in mind, however, is that the oversupply is said to occur at quite different levels of total supply. In other words, countries with a highly-educated labour force are just as concerned about too much education as those with a less highly-educated one. This suggests that possibly in a technical sense the problem is really about the economy (and, perhaps, the whole OECD economy) in general, and not about excess supply of manpower as such. Undoubtedly, those who say that the economy cannot absorb a higher fraction of people with more than minimum qualifications must explain how other countries have managed to do so. Our conclusion, therefore, is that the manpower question is a serious one, but it is not the only relevant consideration.

Although it may be agreed that it is not the sole task of the education system to adjust to the needs (even the manpower needs) of the economy, and that it may have paid excessive attention to those needs in the past, it is surely also reasonable that it gives due weight to them in future; and that, insofar as it does this at all, the adjustment should be a just and efficient one. Thus, it is quite possible to approach education partly as a response to social demand, and to wish to shift the emphasis in that direction, but also to adopt a strategy of manpower planning especially with respect to the supply of higher-educated personnel.

We welcome, therefore, the implication that greater effort will be devoted to manpower planning. By this we do not mean a plan to forecast all the manpower demands of the economy, transfer these into educational needs, and adjust the educational system accordingly. Instead we favour something both more limited and more sophisticated, namely the identification as early as possible of specific areas of excess demand or excess supply, the publication of such discoveries, and assistance to schools, colleges and universities, on the one hand, and employers on the other, to make the appropriate changes. We do not believe that the whole process of change can be left to free enterprise because it would be too slow and too wasteful. But we do not go to the other extreme of advocating a rigid central governmental plan.

Our general approach is very much that of the Memorandum (Part I, Chapter II, para.8). This recognises the problem, but insists it is not insoluble. In particular, it does not regard the educational requirements of specific jobs as fixed for all time, but says that they can be raised, and often should be. The obvious examples concern the wide range of occupations which now recruit graduates in this generation, althout they did not do so in the past. Similarly, the education input into many service occupations has risen noticeably. Examples are medicine, the army, and not least the teaching profession itself.

As well as noting the possibility of changing educational requirements in existing occupations, we heard some evidence advocating a closer look at ways of acting on the demand side of labour, i.e. of changing the occupational structure instead of accepting it as given. As the authors of the 1974 Social and Cultural Report remark: "Those who advocate attunement to the labour market seldom seem to think of the possibility of the labour market being able to adapt itself to the state of education."(1) It is difficult to believe that the advance of technology for the remainder of this century will be incompatible with an ability to absorb educated people. Even if unaided this were so, there remains the strategy of guiding the technology and changing the nature of working life. Many informed people are now adopting the position that an important socio-economic objective henceforth must be an improvement in the quality of working life, including a reduction of boring jobs, such as those on the assembly line, and an increase in the worker's control over his own individual working situation. One of the relevant dimensions would be an extension of the capacity of the job to make use of the working man or woman's increased education; thus, the process of adjustment will be placed more on the job itself and less on the education.

The Memorandum itself recognises the rapid pace of social and economic change. It points out, therefore, that the economic need is not solely for the inculcation of specific skills. Most people in their lifetimes will have to change occupations more than once. The technology they start their working lives in will differ considerably from that in which they end up. Thus, education and training must themselves be a preparation for change. What is needed is adaptability, both of techniques and attitudes. Thus, much that is desirable on educational grounds will also turn out to be economically and socially useful, a conjunction of arguments which forms a major part of the rationale for recurrent education.

We may also mention here a more narrowly economic aspect of the adjustment process. There can be no doubt that a desire for a better paid job is an important motivating factor in determining the demand for additional education. Graduates, in particular, are not merely frustrated if they find themselves without employment in so-called graduate occupations, they may also lose money. A relative increase in the supply of people with more education will diminish their scarcity, and thus their pay may fall compared with others in society. In certain sectors, for instance medicine, this effect may not occur, but when it does it may itself be an important equalising tendency as well as an equilibrating force in the interdependent

1) Social and Cultural Report 1974, Social and Cultural Planning Office, Rijswijk, 1974, p. 129.

system comprising education and the economy. (We may add that we do not argue that the equalising role of education is all that powerful, and we recognise that there remain other powerful forces in society constantly increasing the degree of inequality. We assume we are correct, therefore, in interpreting the Contours Memorandum as recognising the bluntness and inappropriateness of educational policy as an instrument for promoting income equality in isolation from other policies.)

There are two problems that require special mention: one is youth unemployment, the other the position of women. During the economic crisis of the seventies most countries have seen a rise in the unemployment rates experienced by young people. It is recognised that this is not attributable to their being over-educated, and, indeed, it is those with least education and ability who suffer the most persistent unemployment. Obviously, the best way to help them in most countries is a return to full-capacity working and economic expansion. Given that, they may also be helped by micro-economic policies, comprising an increase in both their vocational training and their specific education. Some of this we refer to in our comments on further education and recurrent education.

Here we merely wish to make the obvious point that there are few benefits, if any, of leaving young people without jobs and living on social security. It would be much more sensible to pay them the same money in the form of grants for training and education. (Perhaps, we should add here our approval of the Dutch system that keeps vocational training and general education so close together.) This will place an extra burden on the schools and colleges, but it is quite likely that many of these have spare capacity, and that marginal cost will be low compared with average cost. Also to be placed in the balance are the long run costs of youth unemployment, which leave scars and a bitterness which can sour labour relations for a long time thereafter.

As far as women are concerned, we have the general impression that the Netherlands lies somewhat behind its European partners in making progress towards greater equality of participation in post-compulsory education. OECD statistics show, for example, that the ratio of female to total enrolment in higher education was 27.5 in the Netherlands in 1970 - below almost all other countries.(1) But it is not merely a question of participation rates, and we strongly support the Contours Memorandum when it says, "There must be an

1) OECD Statistical Yearbook, OECD, Paris, 1974, Table 11. At another level: "At the age of 17, the relative participation of girls in daytime education is about two-thirds that of the boys - a situation which has scarcely changed since 1930 ..... with the increased participation in education, the relative proportions between men and women remain approximately equal." Social and Cultural Report, op.cit., p. 120 (our emphasis).

attempt to break with the roles traditionally assigned to boys and girls. Attention must be paid to this point in curriculum development especially." Economic forces here are themselves progressive, in that greater female participation in the labour force will feed back inevitably and powerfully to the education system. But active policy-making is also required to encourage girls to broaden their perspectives of life. In addition, the female requirement of flexibility is even greater than that of the male, for it may be assumed for the foreseeable future that women will continue to stay in the home for the purpose of rearing the family. Their participation in the labour force will be part-time for many years, and when they are ready to become full-time members of the working population, they will find that many of their skills have become obsolete. From the standpoint of the firm, we feel that it should be encouraged to adapt itself much more to employing women (especially those with more than minimal educational qualifications) on a part-time basis. From the standpoint of the education system, women need to be given a foundation which enables them to adapt to work when the time eventually comes for their return. In addition, at the point of re-entry to the labour force, there will be a need for special courses of education and retraining, and clearly the Open School will have a role to play here. We would simply ask the Minister what complementary policies he sees as necessary to help women reach equality: policies whether of an institutional kind, such as the provision of generous care and education facilities for young children, or of a more direct nature, such as the elimination of sex-typing in educational textbooks.

V. COST AND FINANCE

While the Contours Memorandum fails to offer cost estimates of particular proposals, it does not underestimate the importance of taking a serious view of the problems of financing reforms. In addition, it proposes to reconsider existing methods of finance and the existing allocation of the education budget. (There are, of course, exceptions to these propositions. In Part V, Chapter II, we are given an estimate of the extra expenditure consequent on extending compulsory attendance to 12 years. It would be interesting to have the underlying assumptions made explicit and clarified. This will enable the figure of Fls. 350 million in 1985 to be correctly compared with the figure of Fls. 1,015 million in the same year, which is the cost of the autonomous expansion in pupil numbers.)

Before examining these matters we must refer to the general financial and economic evidence that was placed before us. Most of this was extremely general and ad hoc, and it is hard, if not impossible, to regard it as a serious contribution to the determination of a long-run economic perspective for the Netherlands, or the priority that educational expenditure will get within it. A dominating impression was of a high degree of pessimism concerning the Dutch economy both at present and in the foreseeable future. We were told about the limit placed on the government expenditure/national income ratio in the medium term, and were advised to regard the educational budget as most severely limited. At best, it was suggested, education might retain its proportional position within the overall budget, but it was quite possible that it would fare worse than that. A fall in priority might result from an increase in the priority to be placed on such things as health and the environment. Alternatively it might follow from the excess supply of qualified people being generated by the educational system, a theme already discussed in Section IV.

It is not our task (and we are, anyway, unqualified) to comment on the performance of the Dutch economy or to make detailed predictions about its future prosperity or depression. We would be failing in our duty, however, if we did not say we were somewhat disturbed to be told in an extremely general way about economic difficulties without also being given a fully argued paper analysing likely

developments in their recent historical context. To be told simply that the proposals can all be ruled out on grounds of excessive cost, and thus to imply that the whole enterprise is a waste of time, would be extremely discouraging were we to take the allegations seriously. Suffice it to say we did not. Instead we reserve our position, and ask whether some useful and comprehensible expenditure possibilities could be set out on paper, corresponding to the various Contours proposals. It would be particularly illuminating to see some attempt at cost trade-offs: for instance, assuming that costs are very roughly comparable to those in France, where the overall 1974 budget for paid educaticnal leave was over 10 milliard francs for 280m hours, the 350m florins foreseen as the 1985 costs of the raising of the school leaving age would, if redeployed, allow some 36,000 people to take three months leave per year (or over 200,000 to have two weeks), and enable any educational leave scheme to get off to a flying start.

This is a particularly crude example, and we readily accept that any such computations must be regarded as indicating only broad orders of magnitude, but we are sure that they will raise the level of public discussion and thus be very much in the spirit of the Memorandum. If this does not happen, there is the danger that a climate of opinion will emerge which erroneously rejects changes on the grounds of expense when in some cases there will be actual cost savings. Above all it is vital to differentiate the likely costs of education based on present policies from those attributable to the Contours reforms. Obviously, if Contours did not exist or were forgotten, there would still be educational developments in the Netherlands.(1) Not all extra expenditure, therefore, should be loaded on to the new proposals. In sum, we would like to see the question of cost probed further, and realistic estimates made of a number of possibilities with their assumptions specified clearly. The Ministry of Finance has in fact made some preliminary estimates but as these were not presented to us in any detail at the time of our visit, we are unable to comment specifically on them.(2)

This leads us to the general question of <u>educational change in a time of economic trouble</u>. There are at least two possible approaches relevant here. One is to assert that nothing can be done because of shortage of resources; the other is to say that the best time for change and innovation is when overall expansion is limited by extreme scarcity. The Netherlands must decide for themselves which approach suits them better, but it is worth stating as a matter of established fact that in most countries, in the past, reform has not been held back by poverty. If anything, the reverse is true,

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1) See Table 1 for past educational expenditure trends.
2) These estimates were transmitted to the Examiners in written form after their report had been completed.

that the greatest steps forward have occurred when the financial climate was most forbidding. This is not to fall into the error of arguing that everything desirable is available free. There are objectives that really have to be forgone if the money is not there, and there are few things that are entirely costless. Nonetheless, the advantage of not having a rapidly expanding budget is that official and Ministerial energies are released which can be focused on issues of whether the existing budget is being used to best advantage and whether there are unexploited economies which it is now worth making the effort to realise.

There is one particular matter of cost which, although it is pertinent to the analysis of the labour market, also has financial significance. It is customary nowadays, in the economics of education, to include in the evaluation the so-called opportunity cost of people being out of the labour force for varying periods of time and being in the educational system instead. This cost is typically equated with the income that the individuals would have earned which in turn is supposed to be a measure of the output that they would otherwise have produced. Now, while this is a correct procedure, its validity does depend on a number of assumptions crucial among which is that the people would have been otherwise employed. In other words, the alternative to education is productive employment. It is not our wish to state that such a condition fails to hold for the Netherlands economy, but we do wish to draw attention to its potential incompatibility with another thesis that was pressed on us, namely the likelihood of increasing chronic structural unemployment. At the very least it is necessary to test the proposition that some or all of those who stay on in education or re-enter the system would have been in jobs for the full period of their course or study.

Turning to points of detail, we share the Minister's concern that appropriate cost data are not available for the Netherland's education system. Efficient planning must be based on estimates of the distribution of actual unit costs of various types of educational institution, and the setting of norms with which they might be compared. Such estimates have been made for other countries and we would strongly support a recommendation that they should be made for the Netherlands, coupled with a statistical analysis of the causes of cost variations. A problem of particular interest will be the influence of size of institution on educational cost, the clarification of which will help any calculation made of the burden placed on the budget by the freedom provisions of the Constitution. We hypothesise that these provisions have not been at all cheap for the Dutch people, and that insofar as they have led to the proliferation of small schools and the otherwise unnecessary duplication of facilities, may have been rather expensive.

An unusually luxurious item appears to be the cost of university education in the Netherlands. A combination of high professorial salaries, comparatively favourable staff-student ratios, long courses, and high drop-out rates leads to high average costs per graduate. Even at the best of times these costs may be queried, but within a strict budget constraint they must be placed at the head of the list for examination. If we may quote the Memorandum, "To avoid a disproportionately large amount of available funds to be spent on relatively expensive educational facilities for relatively few people at the expense of the development and/or improvement of educational facilities for everyone, there will in particular have to be limitations set to participation in higher education." While such a decision may be necessary we would ask the Minister whether it is possible to devote more effort to discerning causes of the high drop-out rates, with a view to reducing them. Again, we wonder whether on reflection higher education courses need to be so long and whether more recognised points of exit might not be allowed. Thirdly, we note the remarks on reducing the average cost per pupil per year, and hope that our understanding that this applies to higher education is a correct one (see p.42). It would be a pity if a document which regards increasing equality as a significant policy object also wished to lower participation in higher education when it may be precisely the more deserving students who might be left out. A more suitable change, if it were feasible, would be to spread the available funds over a far larger number of graduates. It would also be most suitable if university teachers and administrators, being among the most privileged in society, took the lead in seeking economies and providing greater equity in the dispensing of funds for education. An appraisal of university funding is obviously most useful when related to other education sectors, which serves to underline our earlier point about the need for overall coordination.

The report mentions a number of minor financial reforms. We support the proposition that those who gain economic benefit from extra education might repay part of this through the progressive income tax and other measures. We would emphasise, however, that under no circumstances should fees be levied (as mentioned in the Memorandum) which act as a real deterrent to those in lower income groups to pursue longer and more purely educational (as opposed to vocational) courses.

On administration, efficient use of resources may be promoted by allowing schools greater freedom to dispose of a lump sum available to them. It is important, however, that this goes hand in hand with the determination and promulgation of various norms, and that there should be no weakening of public oversight guaranteeing that the funds are used for genuine educational purposes. The establishment

of the norms themselves requires much monitoring and reporting of expenditure, but if "finance is provided on the basis of material equality" a full flow of information to the centre is necessary. We welcome, therefore, the statements in the Memorandum on improvement of the financing system.

A final question that is relevant in this section concerns the definition of equality. The Contours Memorandum sees that "equality of opportunity" is an acceptable objective only if differences of home background are allowed for, on the one hand, and if due weight is given to the individual personality, on the other. It also seeks to avoid the naïveté that is sometimes associated with the proposed objective of "equality of outcomes". Clearly, this latter objective must be defined relative to the patterns of achievement or participation of groups of individuals such as social classes. The report is also right to emphasise that educational achievement is multidimensional and is not to be assessed solely in terms of academic performance. The Minister's conception of equality as embracing not only access to education but also capacity to participate in decision-making at all levels is a good illustration of one dimension of educational achievement which is often sadly neglected.

A problem emerges, however, about equality defined in terms of access to resources. Although the Constitution guarantees that all schools of a given type shall receive equal public funds, the Memorandum itself (Part V, Chapter II) cites a compelling example of how this equality is more formal than real. It may be doubted whether average expenditure per annum per pupil of a given age cohort is equal. A fortiori because of widely different educational participation rates, lifetime expenditure per pupil of a given age cohort will be nowhere near equalised. We would wish to ask the Minister whether he has considered this as an ultimate objective, and whether, indeed, he regards it as implied by the general spirit of the Contours Memorandum. We would also wish to press the point further by enquiring whether steps are being taken to introduce the notion of positive discrimination into the debate. Although in many places the report emphasises the needs of the socially deprived, should it not be made explicit that funds should be used unequally to redress existing inequalities?

VI. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Research, experimentation and public discussion

The Contours Memorandum is a valuable combination of an 'ideas' document, on the one hand, and an approach to experiment and innovation on the other. We have already supported both these facets in our opening remarks and in our discussion of policy proposals. It is surely right that there should be as widespread appreciation as possible of the changes that may occur in education in the Netherlands, and that the people directly involved should have a chance to contribute their own opinions to the general policy-making process. As long as action itself is not inhibited for too long and it is understood that occasional setbacks are part and parcel of a process of innovation, education is bound to gain from permanent discussion of its means and its objectives. In this way, the twin threats to all reforms - unrealistic expectations and excessive impatience - may be avoided. Open debate is specially valuable in the present case when progress will depend on a transformation of attitudes on the part of a great many interested bodies. We have been told in evidence that a constructive long-term educational policy framework has been demanded for some time by many influential groups in the Netherlands. Those who have made such demands must now exercise their responsibilities constructively as they comment on the Contours Memorandum, and as they participate in the new policies themselves.

An important part of the debate is the feedback of the experience gained in the many different experiments that are taking place. Most of these are not aimed directly at the question of whether a particular initiative is desirable, but more at how the initiative can best be introduced. Nonetheless, the two kinds of questions are not that easily distinguished, and should a group of experiments turn out to be an unmitigated disaster, they are likely to lead to the abandonment of a whole line of action.

The experiments themselves, we have been told, are not meant to be scientific in the sense of being tests of the theories of the social sciences. They are tests of action intended to assist the process of implementation of policies. That this is so (and we ourselves have no intention of entering the never-ending academic

debate on the methodology of the social sciences!) does not detract from the need to formulate the experiments carefully, enabling the maximum possible to be learned from them. We hope, therefore, that the questions they are designed to answer will be carefully formulated, and the experiments themselves carefully monitored. Moreover, once policy itself is going ahead, that is no time to end the experimental approach. In their early days the middle school or the Open School, for example, must continue to be regarded as experiments in that the experience gained may be shared by all concerned; the good parts being put into general practice while mistakes are recognised and warnings issued. In this way policy making will have the dual characteristics of permanent debate and permanent experiment.

Decision-makers will not have an entirely clinical interest in the experiments. The innovation strategy in each case is made up partly of an interpretation of new information as it becomes available but it also involves the use of value judgements. It may be thought that public discussion will be even more of an evaluative kind, ordinary people usually being content to leave technical niceties to experts and administrators, but we trust that there will be considerable public involvement and adequate dissemination. For this reason the objects of the experiments need to be clarified, and where, as will normally be the case, they are different from those of the existing educational system, this also needs to be stressed. Above all, the point must be made that, if the point of the reforms is the pursuit of new ends, a comparison with the old system in terms of its objectives is no longer valid.

It is sometimes thought that change is costless in that we can simply add new benefits to those we are already receiving. But, if qualitative change is taking place, this will not be possible. Thus, while the experiments will bring to light how the new system will work and reassure people that the predicted gains really can be made, they will be distorted if attempts are made simultaneously to preserve all the distinguishing characteristics of the status quo. To take the standard example referred to in the discussion of the middle school, comprehensive education genuinely means the end of the so-called grammar school and what it stood for. This is not to say that the middle school will not have an academic character or emphasise disciplined thought, but even this will be qualitatively different from what went before. It is our hope, therefore, that the experimental innovations will be pursued rigorously and wholeheartedly, for it is only on that basis that the innovation strategy can really be validated.

In sum, we are extremely interested in the attitude to research and experimentation shown by the Contours Memorandum. Its main emphasis lies on practical research, the usefulness of which is plain

to all. This is surely correct, and it is right that research should be guided by the likely needs of policy. The suggested experiments to do with middle schools, the open school, higher education etc. must be interpreted as a form of research. A careful analysis of the experience here will help decision-makers, partly in coming to conclusions about the broad lines of policy, but also in determining the precise form of the changes to be introduced. We repeat our hope very much that all these experiments will be continuously monitored over the next few years, and their results fed back into the administrative machine. Having said that, we would also like to stress the need for fundamental research. Certain of the topics which we have looked at require much deeper analysis, often of a theoretical kind. Examples concern the nature of motivation, of selection and of choice. The existence of these phenomena suggests that what is required is not only a programme involving many studies of specific issues, but also more abstract theorising.

Implementation

In taking evidence in the Netherlands we met many people enthusiastically in favour of the Contours reforms or similar ones. We also met some (who claimed to be hard-headed) who on grounds of planning difficulties and cost were opposed. What seems to be needed is a group with the leading characteristics of both - who are committed to the reforms, but see the need for devising serious, hard-headed methods of achieving them. We would like to ask the Minister whether he has taken steps to set up a central planning group to exercise this responsibility. The purpose of this group will be not so much to write more detailed memoranda, but to spell out for each innovation a step by step planning strategy and provide continuous impetus for their coherent implementation. This is not, of course, to deny the value of amplifying thinking on each sector and giving it a more precise form in a succession of memoranda. It is to emphasise the necessity, and, perhaps, even the urgency of more concrete policy proposals. It is in this area that it appears most needs to be done, especially in regard to the timing of change. Teachers, for example, would be reassured if they had a clearer idea of when the changes that affect them will take place and for how long the actual process of change will last. Although the total policy implied by the Memorandum may take the whole of the remainder of the twentieth century, a rational procedure requires that some sectors get started more quickly than others, although each will have to adjust more than once subsequently as the rest get under way. Once again, if such a planning group were to be set up, we would hope that it would not be restricted to officials from the Ministry

of Education, or even from those of Cultural Affairs and of Social Affairs, but would draw as widely as possible on available expertise.

The projected decline of the birth rate (Table 2 of this Report) is of considerable significance in this respect, for at least two reasons. One is that it should lead to some direct savings in costs, releasing resources for other purposes within the education system. The second is that it should facilitate re-organisation. As, for example, the pressure on the nursery and primary schools diminishes, it should be easier to integrate the two levels, and possibly within them help to unify teaching in a smaller number of establishments. Similarly, it would then seem natural to set a target date for full middle school reform some five or so years later than that in the basic sector. Thus the planning sequence could be, (i) basic school for the remainder of the 1970s and into the early 1980s, (ii) middle school for the greater part of the 1980s. Simultaneously, and not in sequence, the reforms to do with the Open School and the universities could be set in motion.

There is another aspect of the innovation strategy that we must mention and that is its cost. While we were not persuaded by the witnesses we met that the reforms envisaged in the Contours Memorandum were unduly costly or that ultimately they would be a more expensive way of meeting the educational needs of the Netherlands compared with other possibilities, we do agree that the innovation strategy itself and the various experiments cannot be done on the cheap. Some seemingly desirable possibilities will be tried simply to test their flexibility. They will then be discarded. Schools will require extra teachers to examine how alternative curricula might work, and to see where they will fail. The monitoring machinery itself cannot be inexpensive. Even the effort to reduce unit costs, especially in higher education, will add to expense in the short term.

In other words, we must regard the business of innovation as essentially a matter of investment, of incurring extra expense in the short term with the intention of gaining a flow of benefits subsequently. The innovation costs themselves are transitional costs, most of which will disappear as the system gradually settles into a new equilibrium. It would be a mistake, therefore, to hold back the necessary reforms just because their benefits will be delayed and because they add to the pressure of demand in the present. It is also our view that it would be wrong to be too economical in the provision of a budget for investing (say) in the experiments of curriculum reform and new teaching methods. Not to allow enough time and money to devise new curricula or to examine what retraining teachers need, and then to test both will be to doom the enterprise to failure before it begins. There are good grounds for saying that if the whole programme for change is going to be underfinanced, then, as

with a more conventional investment project, it would be better not to start. It is our strong recommendation, therefore, that the cost of each innovation should be estimated as accurately as possible, with the appropriate mixture of realism and supportiveness. In a sense what we are asking for is co-ordination with a tough-minded, sympathetic Minister of Finance.

Our final comment relates to the three models of strategies of change in education outlined in the Contours Report. We agree that "there will always have to be combinations of various aspects of the various models". In particular, there must be a balance between governmental-political influence, technical expertise, and participation both by the professionals and by the consumers. Practical experience shows that no matter what approach is formally adopted, politicians and technical experts at all levels have their say. In addition, simply because of their position in schools and colleges the teachers can make their impact felt. We feel obliged, therefore, to make a special plea for pupils and parents, and to ask whether more could not be done not only to involve them but also to show how their involvement has had an effect on the eventual outcome. Participatory democracy is about more than giving citizens an opportunity to voice an opinion, for those opinions must actually be listened to. This is not to say that every person can get his or her own way since even more intrinsic to democracy is compromise. Nonetheless, we feel that maximum effort should be made to be sensitive to opinion, and to show how the course of events will be, is, and has been shaped by it.

VII. EXAMINERS' QUESTIONS

The body of our report raises a number of issues. On some of these, explicit questions have been posed, whilst others have been discussed in a manner which left the relevant questions implicit. The list below represents a selection of those issues which we felt to be of greatest significance, and round which we propose that the Confrontation Meeting should be centred. In a sense, therefore, they constitute a brief résumé of our report, but they naturally focus on the areas we feel to be in need of clarification or further scrutiny and as such are not presented as in any way all-inclusive. The Contours Memorandum aims above all at stimulating policy discussion, and it is to that end that our questions have been formulated.

Section II Basic Education

(a) The primary school (pp. 32-33)

Our question here refers not to the content of the proposed reform, but to the approach to its implementation: if there exists sufficient consensus on both the value and the feasibility of the new structure for primary education, what are the prospects for establishing without delay a precise timetable and strategy for the implementation of the basic changeover, taking into account in particular the curricular requirements?

(b) The middle school (pp. 33-37)

The three questions under this heading are all clearly interrelated:

(i) The curriculum. We make full allowance for the concern on the part of the denominations to preserve as far as is reasonable their autonomy in deciding on the content of schooling at this level. Moreover, we recognise that curricular questions are often best resolved at a level as close to the individual school as is possible. Nonetheless we see the development of appropriate curricula as so essential to the success of the experiments and to the eventual introduction of the middle school that our first question in this area must be: what measures are envisaged for strengthening the support and impetus given to the development of curricula specifically designed for the new schools?

(ii) Articulation with the upper secondary school. Our question here is simply whether enough attention has been paid to the problems which may arise from the transition between the middle school and the proposed high school? This has, in fact, a double application: to the particular position of the students concerned in the experimental middle schools, and subsequently to the general situation if and when the middle school becomes universal. In particular, how can a successful articulation with the high school be devised without impairing the integrity of the middle school curriculum?

(iii) Internal differentiation. The Contours Memorandum is refreshingly open in its discussion of internal differentiation. It leads us to ask: how can internal differentiation be further supported by research and experimental effort, so as to balance the need to avoid rigid streaming with the individualisation of the curriculum and of guidance services?

Section III Education after the age of 16

(a) Raising the school leaving age (pp. 39-40)

We discuss this at some length in the report, and are led to two very direct questions:

(i) Given that the right of every child to proceed to upper secondary school should be recognised, both formally and in terms of ensuring that suitable provision is available, is there still a case for envisaging compulsion, even in the long-term?

(ii) Does the Minister perceive a possible tension between the adoption of a recurrent education approach and the extension of the initial schooling period?

(b) The upper secondary school (p. 41)

It will be obvious from the text that our main concern here is the apparent rigidity of the separation into three different streams at this level, with the attendant danger of domination by the academic stream. Our question therefore is as follows: do the Dutch authorities give priority to the offering at this level of a genuine choice between work and further education, and would they consider that the vocational and general streams should for that reason be kept as far as possible together?

(c) Higher Education (pp. 42-43)

(i) Our first question refers back to the high school. In the same way as the high school can cast its shadow back into the middle school, so the universities and other institutions of higher education can strongly influence the high school. We would therefore like to know: how far can

admission requirements to higher education be changed to allow a more balanced development of higher education, consonant with a recurrent education approach, without distorting the previous phase of education? Specifically, how might the recognition of work experience as a qualification be further developed?

(ii) We have seen that there are already detailed proposals for the eventual unification of the higher education sector, entailing a bridging of the divide between universities and higher vocational institutions. Our second question is whether this sector, when eventually unified and also during the transitional period, is seen as falling squarely within the ambit of a recurrent education approach, so that its policies and development will be integrally related to other education and training provision?

(d) The Open School (pp. 43-44)

(i) We recognise the distinction made in the Memorandum between 'second road' and 'second chance', and accept that at the outset the Open School will be predominantly concerned with providing second chances. We would ask, however, whether the Open School is foreseen as eventually becoming a normal experience for Dutch people, to be regarded as part of the regular education system?

(ii) We have stated our interpretation of the Open School as basically an organisational initiative, bringing together various types of educational provision for the benefit of adults. Given this organisational character, we would ask what relation is foreseen, in both the experimental and subsequent phases, between the Open School, the local education networks and other relevant policy bodies and departments?

Section IV The Relation between the Labour Market and the Education System

(a) Manpower Planning (pp. 48-49)

We have made it quite explicit that we do not consider the provision of trained manpower to be the main function of the education system. The notion of 'over-qualification' is contingent upon social attitudes as well as the changing structure of the labour market. We would therefore ask: are there certain sectors in relation to which the Dutch authorities regard it as both possible and desirable to plan educational provision in order to achieve a better balance between education and the labour market? To what extent, moreover, is such planning conceived of as also influencing the demand for labour, i.e. as entailing changes in the character and quantity of the jobs available?

(b) The position of women (pp. 50-51)

We have expressed our view that particular attention should be paid to the needs of women, and welcomed the Open School's initiative in this direction. We would ask, therefore, how do the Dutch authorities see the role of educational planning in further promoting equality between the sexes, in particular as regards reinforcing the impetus provided by increased participation in the labour force? What complementary policies are seen as necessary to help women achieve equality, either of an institutional kind such as the provision of care and education facilities for young children, or of a more direct nature such as the elimination of sex-typing in educational text books?

(c) Policy co-ordination

Any discussion of the relation between education and the labour market tends to imply the need for policy co-ordination. What machinery is envisaged to allow the proper co-ordination of relevant education, manpower and other social policies?

Section V Cost and Finance

(a) Equality (pp. 55-56)

We start with the broadest and most ambitious issue: would the Minister adopt as a long-term objective the equalisation over lifetime of educational expenditure per individual of a given age cohort, and does this imply the eventual introduction of a system of educational drawing rights? To what extent is the principle of positive discrimination - the allotment of proportionately more funds to those under some form of disadvantage - accepted as a basis for resource allocation?

(b) The data system (p. 54)

What steps can be taken to improve the availability of cost data on the Netherland's education system? In particular, to what extent is the preparation of cost trade-offs seen as a useful way of clarifying policy alternatives?

(c) Cost estimates (pp. 52-53)

Apart from the general improvements of data supply, what are the prospects for detailed cost estimates of the Contours proposals being fairly quickly available? Will these take into account both the autonomous growth in educational expenditure which would anyway have taken place, and the sums which must be specifically allocated to meet the extra costs of the transition to a renewed system?

Section VI Planning and Implementation

(a) Central Planning Group (p. 59)

Despite the doubts we have expressed concerning the proliferation of planning bodies, we discern a need for a group with sufficient responsibility and muscle to plan and encourage the detailed implementation of the proposals. Our question is simply: is the Minister taking any steps to set up a central planning group whose composition and remit will enable it effectively to discharge this function?

(b) Monitoring and dissemination (p. 57)

Our interest in the approach to research and experimentation, and to the encouragement of open debate adopted in the Contours Memorandum leads us to ask: what steps are being taken, first to ensure that progress is adequately and continuously monitored, and secondly that the results of the monitoring are effectively disseminated?

(c) Teacher training (p. 36)

We have repeatedly referred to the way in which the implementation of reforms depends upon the support and adaptability of teachers. We therefore ask: is the Minister satisfied that enough opportunities are being provided for teachers to prepare themselves to participate in the innovations at all levels - nursery/primary, middle, a high school combining general and vocational training, and the new forms of adult learning? In particular, to what extent will the various types of teacher training be provided within a coherent and unified system?

(d) Change models (p. 61)

We reserve until last a question which concerns the nature of the Contours Memorandum itself in the light of its three models of strategies of change. Given that the Memorandum has gone a long way in stimulating discussion and in alerting those affected to the issues under debate, how does the Minister envisage its future evolution in relation to the three models? Put differently, to what extent will the effort to involve the community as a whole be sustained in order to make the formulation of policy itself an educative exercise?

Table 1

GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE FOR EDUCATION 1960-1975

(in mln guilders)

	Real expenditure according to Central Statistical Office							Budgeted/calculated expenditure			
	1960	1962	1964	1966	1968	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Total government expenditure on education	2 006	2 650	3 785	4 940	6 358	8 541	9 936	10 445	11 845	14 710	17 980
spent by:											
- Ministry of Education and Science	1 426	1 976	2 924	3 924	5 083	7 126	8 321	8 880	10 067	12 044	15 285
- Other Ministries	93	144	162	629(1)	767(1)	873(1)	1 031(1)	1 565(1)	1 778(1)	2 126(1)	2 695(1)
- Provinces	3	4	4	4	4	4	3				
- Muncipalities	484	526	695	383	504	538	581				
Percentage of total expenditure											(in percentages)
spent by:											
- Ministry of Education and Science	71	75	77	79	80	83.5	84	85(2)	85(2)	85(2)	85(2)
- Other Ministries	5	5	4	13	12	10	10	15	15	15	15
- Provinces	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
- Muncipalities	24	20	19	8	8	6.5	6				

1) Including the special payments for primary education, made by the Ministry of Home Affairs via the Muncipalities Fund, in the general funds of muncipalities.
2) Estimated.

Table 2

ESTIMATED GROWTH OF THE POPULATION OF THE NETHERLANDS 1975 - 2000
(tabulated from Graph 6 of the Contours Memorandum, based on the Central Statistical Office forecast)

(1975 = 100)

Age groups	Hypoth.	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
0 - 4 (1975 level 1,082,000)	High	100	114	111	111.5	110	107
	Low						
5 - 9 (1975 level 1,192,000)	High	100	90.5	104	100	101	99.5
	Low			90.5	90	91	90
10 - 14 (1975 level 1,213,500)	High	100	97	89	102	98.5	98.5
	Low				88.5	88.5	89
15 - 19 (1975 level 1,150,400)	High	100	105	103	93	107	104
	Low					93	93
20 - 24 (1975 level 1,111,700)	High	100	103	108	105	96	109
	Low						96
25 - 29 (1975 level 1,174,100)	High	100	94	97.5	102	100	90
	Low						

Part Three

THE CONFRONTATION MEETING

20th May, 1976

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Professor Becker, the Chairman of the Examiners, began by expressing support for the Contours Memorandum as an example of open government, and as a bold attempt to provide overall guidelines for the reform of the education system in all its complexity. He went on to give a rapid account of the essentials of the Examiners' report, acknowledging that they had been obliged, through time constraints, to omit certain important issues, such as regionalisation.

Basic Education

The Examiners found a broad consensus already existing on the proposals on primary education, designed to achieve a greater coherence between pre-school and primary school through single institutions catering for the whole 4 - 12 age group. Social skills, but not formal literary ones, should be given early stress, and a precise timetable established for the reform's implementation. The middle school is clearly more controversial, but the Examiners declared themselves firmly in favour of a comprehensive model. They wished, however, to draw attention to three critical aspects: curricular development, for which the central authorities should accept ultimate responsibility, even though it should take place as close to the schools as possible; the transition between middle and upper secondary school, a crucial question if the good intentions of the former are not to be frustrated; and the notion of internal differentiation, whose potential superiority to rigid streaming or setting can only be realised through sustained research and experimentation.

Education after the age of 16

The raising of the school leaving age was clearly one of the Memorandum's more surprising proposals. The Examiners' principal query was whether a compulsory extension of the initial schooling period was necessary or indeed desirable, particularly if a system of recurrent education is to be developed. As far as the upper secondary school was concerned, there were problems of avoiding its domination by the universities, and of assuring a genuine choice between

vocational and general studies. The Open School was seen as an experiment worthy of full support, which should operate as close as possible to the home and the place of work; both it and the reformed higher education sector should be seen as constituting parts of a general system of recurrent education.

Education and the Labour Market

A balanced view was needed of the role of education in providing trained manpower. Whilst future manpower demands are impossible to forecast with any degree of accuracy, information on present excesses of demand or supply could be usefully publicised. The Examiners expressed a certain scepticism towards the problem of an oversupply of educated manpower. Educational requirements can, and in fact almost always do, change, and there was a strong case for changing the demand for labour, by improving the quality of working conditions and allowing for more workers' responsibility.

Planning and Implementation

The Examiners' final suggestion was for a central planning group, which would guide the implementation of the proposals, ensure that the changes taking place in one part of the education system would mesh with developments in the other sectors, and bind together the work of the various innovatory bodies.

Professor Becker suggested that the discussion should be structured around 4 groups of questions:

a) costs and finance;
b) post-16 education, with special reference to recurrent education;
c) curriculum development and teacher training;
d) planning and implementation.

He concluded his introductory remarks by referring to the spread of the OECD technique of educational policy reviews (it has been adopted by Israel), and by expressing his appreciation of the open welcome extended by the Dutch authorities to the Examiners during their visit.

Dr. Jos van Kemenade, the Dutch Minister of Education, began by stressing that the Contours Memorandum had been produced as a discussion document, and that its sales of 125,000 reflected a considerable success in that direction. He also pointed to the heterogeneity of the document's proposals, exemplified by the contrast between its policy on higher education, now given concrete and detailed shape in the 1975 University Restructuring Act, and its thinking on the upper secondary school which he acknowledged as being still embryonic. A particular advantage of an OECD review at this

early stage in policy formulation was the opportunity it afforded for making direct and effective use of international discussion, through the Examiners' work and the Committee's debate. He assured the Committee that the report would receive wide circulation throughout the Netherlands and would be put to full use in the follow-up to the Contours Memorandum.

Education and Society

Dr. van Kemenade welcomed the fact that the debate on education's role in society had broadened beyond the one-sided view of it as a factor in economic development. Its financial implications could be tackled from three angles. First, the very level of prosperity towards which education makes such a major contribution could be threatened by an unbridled growth in its costs. Secondly, expenditure on education now has to compete more strenuously against other social welfare claims, and thirdly it must be discussed in relation to a just distribution of both funds and opportunities. This last goal could be achieved not so much by "the equalisation of lifetime education expenditure per individual of a given age cohort", as the Examiners had tended to suggest, but by combining the endowment of each individual with good opportunities at the outset, with the establishment of a system of educational drawing rights to allow him/her to take part in recurrent education according to his/her needs. This must entail positive discrimination, or the allocation of extra resources to the disadvantaged.

The Minister agreed that the availability of cost data on the education system needs improvement, a subject taken up later in the first group of questions. As for the relations between education and the labour market, he began with a blunt warning against what he termed the dangerous misconception of thinking that the deeply entrenched unemployment situation can be simply solved by gearing education, especially vocational education, to demand. This ignores both the manifold differences between the causes of unemployment for widely different groups, and the fact that preparation for work is only one of education's objectives.

Specifically, he pointed to certain factors which would have to be taken into account if a better balance was to be achieved between education and the labour market. First amongst these is the recognition that the relationship between supply and demand is very far from a static one, as supply often creates demand, and forecasts of a surplus can lead to a drop in supply. A second factor is the greater impact of unemployment on unskilled young people, relative to those who are supposedly 'over-educated'.

Thirdly, there is the difficulty of gearing even vocationally-oriented education to the widely varying needs of the labour market, due to the rapidity of economic and technological changes and the lag involved in adapting courses, curricula and teaching methods. Dr. van Kemenade concluded that for the time being the chances of solving labour market problems are limited, but that great efforts should be made to influence the demand for labour. In this respect, he observed, OECD is well placed to help its Member countries.

The Minister turned back on the Examiners their suggestion that there is a possible tension between the adoption of a recurrent education approach and the extension of the initial schooling period. He argued that in order adequately to prepare people for making new choices and accomplishing new tasks, education must broaden its objectives and a 12 year period of basic education is therefore necessary, to be followed by a minimum time of two years to allow the acquisition of the requisite insight and skills for entry into the world of work. The issue of compulsion was taken up later; at this juncture the Minister concluded by referring to the fact that adult education facilities are largely used by people who have already attained an above average level of education, and that one must therefore continue to tackle the problem of placing everyone on an equal footing from the start.

Strategies for Innovation and Implementation

Dr. van Kemenade explained that the publication of the Contours Memorandum had resulted in extensive discussions among parents, school boards, teachers, labour unions, employers and students; the results of these discussions would be collected and published. A follow-up memorandum would be published in about March 1977, and the ensuing second round of talks would allow the 'contours' to be fitted in. He was therefore fully appreciative of the Examiners' plea for involving pupils, parents and the community in the process of change.

The role of curriculum development and teacher training was accepted as crucial, and was to be discussed later in the day; the Minister referred here to the establishment in 1975 of the Curriculum Development Foundation, which will pay special attention to formulating curricula for primary schools, and will incorporate the relevant work of previously independent committees. He replied to the specific question about the timetable for introducing the new primary school, by referring to the imminent publication of a draft bill on this very sector.

Finally, Dr. van Kemenade said that he was not convinced of the need for a central planning group, and would elaborate his reasons later. He concluded by acknowledging that he had not answered all the Examiners' questions, and voiced his opinion that in any case

they were to some extent rhetorical - a succint way of raising issues which would need further research and which could now be discussed.

The Secretary General of the OECD, Mr. Emile van Lennep, expressed his pleasure in seeing that Dutch educational policy was being placed in a broader framework, and that the Minister had explicitly related educational planning to the continued growth of prosperity and welfare expenditure. Such an approach opened up a wider debate on the whole issue of resource allocation, and the OECD was very conscious of the need to bring into the balance sheet qualitative as well as quantitative factors; to this end it was currently engaged in the task of developing social indicators as instruments to help in making choices between social policy options, and it was hoped that these indicators would become operational within the next two or three years.

Dr. van Kemenade fully accepted the need to consider both quantitative and qualitative elements. He singled out as a particular example of the latter the need to expand opportunities for participation in decision-making, but also expressed his apprehensiveness about the difficulty of carrying out a cost/benefit analysis of such a factor. Mr. Leestma, the Chairman of the Education Committee, then remarked that this exchange of views led on to the first group of questions: costs and finance.

II. COSTS AND FINANCE

Professor Peston opened his introduction of this theme with a general remark on the refreshingly optimistic tone of the Contours Memorandum. In a time when there was a widespread tendency on the part of those in the education service to adopt a resigned and defensive attitude, the Dutch were now reaffirming their belief in the value of education, both intrinsically and as a contributory factor in the achievement of broad social goals.

The major task for educational planners confronted by the costs issue was to achieve a proper balance between acknowledging the 'finiteness' of resources and the consequent need for choices to be made, on the one hand, and on the other refusing to allow such constraints so to dominate the debate that potentially fruitful policy proposals were prematurely stifled. Cost-consciousness in the face of economic stringency is only realistic, but over-attention to the short-term expenditure implications is unlikely to allow the optimal choice to be made.

This holds good even on the financial plane. For in addition to aiming at an accurate estimation of the financial implications of what is actually proposed, one should also reflect upon the costs of inactivity; the tradition of a Gladstonian Finance Ministry may demand that one restricts budgetary considerations to as narrow a field as possible, but it should not be forgotten that on occasions reluctance to countenance expenditure may entail greater costs at other times or in other fields.

Ideally, one would like to be totally frank about costs. But Professor Peston remarked that in his experience the dialogue between a spending ministry (such as that of education) and the Ministry of Finance was often not based on an equal rapport de force, and this led to a tendency on the part of the former to understate the initial costs of their proposals in order to give themselves a fairer chance of winning approval. This is a matter of interdepartmental logistics; but a further - and perhaps intellectually more demanding - difficulty is the asymmetry in the evaluation of costs and benefits. Even given the reservations already mentioned as to the true estimation of costs, they are nevertheless relatively susceptible to quantification, whereas the ensuing benefits are often hard to identify distinctly

and it is even then difficult to place a realistic figure on them. There is, therefore, a danger of certain arguments exerting more influence simply because they make use of more readily quantifiable factors.

These, then, are some of the threads which form the backdrop to any discussion of educational expenditure. More specifically, it was very welcome to hear that the Dutch have already carried out some detailed costings, and that they are in the process of executing further work on this score. Professor Peston concluded by referring to the questions posed in that section of the Examiners' report which dealt with this issue, reminding the Committee that this was only one out of six sections. What steps were being taken to improve the costing machinery, and within what general approach to the financial aspects of educational policy?

Dr. van Kemenade replied that people had earlier held the view that what was good for schools was good for society. But rapid growth in the costs of education had coincided with a greater prominence accorded to other social issues such as environmental ones, and this conjunction had resulted in a much closer scrutiny of educational expenditure. He freely acknowledged the Netherlands' need for a better costing system, and outlined the following ways in which progress towards this end was being made:

1. There is a continuous effort within the Ministry of Education itself to improve its budgeting system, for instance in the development of machinery for monitoring students flows with their financial implications. Individual programme budgeting is now under way.
2. A bill proposing a bureau to carry out quantitative estimates is currently before Parliament. The Minister described it as astonishing that it is only now that such a bureau is being set up.
3. In the Netherlands - as in some other countries - the subject of economics of education has up to now been seriously underemphasised in the universities. In the study of education, pedagogical and philosophical issues are given priority, followed by empirical work, and economic aspects are relegated to last place - there is, for example, not one professor in the subject. There is a growing awareness of the need to correct this weakness.
4. Similarly, innovations in education were until recently approached solely from the social and pedagogical viewpoints; however, the experiments currently under way, and those in the future, will include analysis of the economic implications.

5. Proposals put to the Dutch Parliament now include detailed financial estimates, in striking contrast to the 1963 proposals for secondary education, for instance, where there was considerable confusion over the financing. The Minister quoted the 1975 bill on university reform and the 1976 bill on primary schools as examples of efforts to accompany legislative proposals with exact cost analyses.

However, the Minister fully agreed that this question should not be interpreted solely in terms of the estimation of direct costs. Assessment of the expected benefits should also be carried out in as detailed a fashion as possible, and this should include an evaluation of the social aspects, in spite of the difficulties to which he had referred in his introductory remarks.

Dr. van Kemenade particularly picked up Professor Peston's comment on the need for balance. He stressed that the decision as to what constituted an appropriate balance was not an objective one which could be arrived at through purely technical means, but an essentially political matter which should involve a wide-ranging dis[redacted] of precisely the sort which the philosophy of the Contours Memora[redacted]ould promote. He referred to a recent poll in the Netherlan[redacted]h showed a high percentage of the population as resistant to t[redacted] suggestion that the education budget should be reduced.

Delegates on the Committee were then invited to participate in this issue. Mr. Mitsuta (Japan) pointed to the growth in international economic co-operation, and asked whether this trend affected the formation of educational policy at national level.

Dr. van Kemenade agreed that international co-operation was increasingly necessary, but said that co-operation in educational matters differed substantially from economic interdependence. Any initiative towards co-ordinating educational policy between countries ran up against long-standing historical differences, which were deeply ingrained in the content of the education offered in individual countries. Moreover, educational systems are often strongly decentralised, for instance in the United Kingdom and Germany.

Mr. Mandic (Yugoslavia) had three questions: does preparation for a job or a more humanist approach receive greater emphasis in the Netherlands, and to what extent can the two be combined? What is being done to support the proposed innovations in terms of the content of education and the position of teachers? On what basis was the Contours Memorandum prepared - as the subjective outcome of discussion, or objectively based on research?

Mr. Eide (Norway) began by saying that the growth targets envisaged were not dramatic when compared with those of other countries. He argued that enrolment rates are often not the decisive factor in the eventual cost of educational policy, and stressed the

size of the margins of error which occur in cost projections - he spoke from bitter experience, having presented some 64 estimates to the Norwegian Parliament with an intimidatingly low record of accuracy. In saying this he did not wish to discourage cost estimates, but merely to argue for a realistic attitude to their value. He asked, therefore, whether the Minister saw the decisive factor in educational policy as being not so much technical cost calculations as the workings of a complex political process, which may entail a less tidy but in the last analysis more rational approach. Mr Eide also asked whether there was any implication in the Contours Memorandum that those who were particularly gifted would require extra resources for the full exploitation of those gifts.

Mr. Roeloffs (Germany) described the Examiners' report as concise, even blunt in its presentation of the issues. He asked whether the Contours Memorandum was to be regarded as a governmental document, or one emanating from the Ministry of Education. Did it involve detailed negotiations with other ministries, and with the population at large? To illustrate the nature of such interchanges, he recounted how the German education ministry had predicted, at a time of full employment, a shift from part-time apprenticeship to full-time secondary education and elicited from the manpower department the reaction that this would exacerbate the labour shortage; when, some five years later, they talk of the need for earlier work experience and better integration of education and work, the manpower authorities express concern over the consequences for an already saturated labour market.

Mr. Appleyard (UK) asked whether the Minister intended that the existing 28 per cent of the national budget devoted to education would be maintained or even increased. He also asked to what extent the Minister hoped to achieve consensus on his proposals, particularly in the sense of enabling them to survive a possible change in the government.

Replying first to the Yugoslav delegate, Dr. van Kemenade expressed doubts about the distinction drawn between knowledge which is useful for professional life and the ability to develop as an independent individual. Sound factual knowledge is obviously essential for the latter objective as well; it is the way in which this is taught and related to everyday social life which is crucial. The schools have great independence in determining content, and indeed 70 per cent of primary schools are denominational (in spite of being 100 per cent subsidised). The government's role is more to coordinate curricular development and the examination structure than to determine the exact content - there is free choice of textbooks in Dutch schools. The Ministry has taken the initiative in launching extensive discussions with teachers concerning the proposed

reforms, and Dr. van Kemenade informed the Committee that he had already been involved in innovation as an educational scientist, before he became Minister. As for the Yugoslav delegate's third question, there was certainly a subjective element in the preparation of the Contours Memorandum, but the team responsible for it had drawn widely on available research as a basis for the proposals it contained.

Turning to Mr. Eide's statement, Dr. van Kemenade agreed that the projections were neither dramatic (though some of his countrymen seemed to regard them as such) nor to be relied on as very exact in the long-term. He didn't see the cost issue as wholly determining decisions, but did consider it as a factor in the political discussions which led up to such decisions. Referring to the differential distribution of resources, he made it quite explicit that such a distribution would be weighted in favour of the underprivileged - in other words, that he subscribed to the principle of positive discrimination.

Replying to Mr. Roeloffs, the Minister explained that the Memorandum had been issued with the approval of the Cabinet, and hence was a governmental document, now open for discussion in all quarters. There was, moreover, an interdepartmental committee, composed of representatives from eight departments, set up to discuss the document and the comments submitted on it. There is an especially close relationship with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Recreation and Social Welfare over the Open School.

The Minister said that it would be impossible to predict the percentage of the national budget devoted to education, since this depended on future choices concerning expenditure on social insurance and suchlike policies. There is currently a lively debate on the reallocation of resources within the education budget itself, for instance from higher education to the primary sector. On the question of consensus, this varied between the different sectors: on the proposals for a unified primary school there was a high degree of consensus, whereas the middle school was arousing a considerable amount of controversy, particular opposition coming from the teachers in traditional 'grammar schools' and the conservative party, which holds a different view on the social structure. The Minister also explained that he prefers an innovation strategy whereby directive, 'top-down' legislation is eschewed in favour of a longer, more gradual process of implementation, involving the discussion of broader social issues.

Mr. Gass of the Secretariat asked whether the Minister saw himself as moving towards a new concept of educational finance (as distinct from immediate cost issues), especially as regards the role of fee-paying. Dr. van Kemenade was clear that the major role in

educational finance should continue to be played by the state. It was, however, time for a debate on this issue, including the possibility of enterprises providing finance both for regular education and for education within the workplace. Finally, he pointed to the need to consider any proposals for fee-paying in close conjunction with the prevailing income distribution within the society.

III. THE UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL AND RECURRENT EDUCATION

Mr. Sandgren, introducing this section, said that there was general agreement that everyone should have a certain basic education and a minimum of training. The question is, when and how to achieve this aim? Experience has revealed the problems of external and internal motivation, leading to the conclusion that there should be no extension of the initial schooling period until curricula and teaching methods had been devised suitable to the needs of all youngsters; even if this were achieve it should still be the right of each individual to continue his or r studies after the middle school. For those who leave schoo t this stage, responsibility lies firmly with the educational rities to help them, and the effective discharge of this respo lity will call for co-operation with other authorities, such as t dealing with labour market and social welfare matters. The Exam believed that the acceptance of responsibility on such a basis often be a more realistic approach than the raising of the o leaving age.

Turing to the closely relate e of recurrent education, Mr. Sandgren said that the Contou randum's proposals were broadly in line with such a strate there were a number of points on which the Examiners would e clarification and elaboration from the Minister. In the first place, whether or not it is compulsory, is the upper secondary school envisaged as preparing its students both for working life and further study? The issue here is how to ensure that the content and structure of the upper secondary school offer to all the age group a real choice between continuing their studies and entering a job. Clearly, it is linked to the policy of admissions to higher education, on which the Examiners also requested clarification.

The recurrent education approach implies that equal priority should be given to what are sometimes called the first and second roads to education. In other words, those who choose to interrupt their studies and resume them later should be able to avail themselves of educational opportunities in equal measure with those who study for a longer initial period. The Examiners' question on this issue referred to the role of the Open School: did the Minister envisage the Open School as eventually forming an integral part of

the regular education system, allowing the appropriate balance to be established between the first and second roads? **Mr. Sandgren** finished by referring the Minister to the other questions underlined at the end of the Examiners' report.

In reply, **Dr. van Kemenade** saw the obligation to ensure that all people, and especially the underprivileged, receive a basic education equipping them with the skills to participate in a complex society, as the fundamental reason for making the basic period of education compulsory. Recognition of the right to learn was not a sufficient guarantee as long as social and economic factors inhibit the exercise of this right. This entailed a school-leaving age of 16 or 17; the exact age would depend on a number of factors, but the Minister singled out in particular the growing problem of motivating young people to learn. This applied to the 16 - 19 age group, but also to 14 and 15 year olds. The task here was to devise ways of relating the content and the teaching methods to the world outside; and it was only when this had been done that the compulsory age could be extended to 17. He reminded the Committee that 16 year olds already had two days a week compulsory release.

In any case, then, children must reach the age of 15 with a desire to continue learning. The Minister argued that it was wiser to try to solve the problem of motivation and of school learning/work relations than to press ahead with the erection of a whole array of second-chance possibilities. Over the last 6 years the Netherlands has had a system of 'participation education', combining vocational and general education for one or two days a week for 15 and 16 year olds. Looking at the results, the Minister was not optimistic about the potential of part-time education alone for solving the motivation problem; he saw rather the need for a variety of options, including both full-time and part-time education.

Turning to **Mr. Sandgren's** specific questions, the Minister affirmed that the Contours Memorandum did envisage compulsory attendance at the upper school, at least to the student's 18th year. He agreed that the present structure did not permit a fair choice between further education and direct entry into working life, but thought that the three streams proposed in the Contours Memorandum would indeed permit such a choice. He did not perceive the academic stream as necessarily dominant; in any case, a comprehensive upper secondary school was not a realistic proposition in the next 30 years - and 20 years was already a long enough period to attempt to handle.

As for the chances of returning to study later in life, the real problem was the maintenance of the individual's standard of living, and that of his or her family. This obstacle had not yet been surmounted, and the Minister frankly did not envisage a solution emerging within the next five years, but negotiations were taking

place between employers and trade unions, and a preparatory committee, composed of representatives from the ministries of education, cultural affairs and social affairs, was currently working on how appropriate schemes for educational leave might be developed. Recognition of work experience as a qualification would clearly have to be tackled in this context; for the time being, it was more a question of building in short periods of work experience into existing educational provision.

In explaining the role envisaged for the Open School, the Minister first referred to the existence of evening schools and of the so-called 'mother schools', which are largely concerned with allowing women to acquire, during the day-time, lower secondary qualifications. The Open School would co-ordinate all the existing provision, both vocational and non-vocational, including correspondence courses, and also provide further opportunities where these were needed. But all this takes place in the individual's free time, and the Minister again referred to the very embryonic state of Dutch thinking on educational leave.

The discussion was then thrown open to the Committee. Mr. Porteners (New Zealand) insisted on the need to consider the teachers' position. Teachers must be prepared to deal with the unmotivated 15 and 16 year olds. From his experience as an inspector, Mr. Porteners noted that there is often a striking discrepancy between what is said to be done and what is actually done in the classroom. What were the Dutch proposing for the teachers?

Mr. Roeloffs (Germany) asked whether the Dutch were proposing school-based professional training, or training based on the place of work and essentially on-the-job. Who is in overall charge of the training afforded to those who combine apprenticeships with two days a week release? He described the efforts made in Germany to provide the master craftsmen with a full qualification for them to be able to fulfil their training function more effectively. He also had a question for the Examiners. To argue for the closer integration of academic and vocational streams at upper secondary level seemed to him to entail one of two positions: either support for the insertion of academic elements into technical training - the 'ich auch gymnasium', which Mr. Roeloffs was not inclined to favour - or establishment of the vocational courses' claim to be as intellectually demanding as their academic counterparts. To which of these positions would the Examiners subscribe? To this Mr Sandgren replied that he could not provide a model for the upper secondary school, but that the basic aim should be to avoid a division into separate and parallel schools. This must entail the development of diversified curricula corresponding to the multiplicity of aims, but the success of a comprehensive model at this level would depend on one's view of

higher education - if this was narrowly conceived and admissions to it tightly restricted according to traditional academic achievement, there would be little prospect of success. He would favour greater recognition of vocational experience, and hence incline towards Mr. Roeloff's second alternative.

Mr. Goldschmidt (Denmark) asked to what extent it would be possible, given the tripartite structure of the proposed upper secondary school, to avoid rigid departmentalism by building up a modular system which would allow greater freedom of choice and at the same time furnish a common background of knowledge. He was doubtful whether the proposed structure would make it possible adequately to cater for the special needs of those who at present drop out immediately at the end of compulsory schooling.

Mr. Sette (Italy) referred again to the issue of the length of compulsory schooling. But as well as discussing the raising of the leaving age to 18, he felt that lowering the entry age to 4 was of equal if not greater importance: what priority did the Dutch authorities give to this proposal? Mr.Knauss (Germany) also wondered what the financial implications were of extending the schooling period at both ends.

Replying first to the questions concerning the age of entry to compulsory school, Dr. van Kemenade explained that it was not a question of compulsory entry at 4. Of all 5 year olds 98 per cent already attend school, so compulsion presented no problem for this age group; the figure for 4 year olds was 80 per cent, and compulsion was not proposed for them. The Primary School Bill proposed a single institution for 4 - 12 year olds, and this would allow children to begin school at different times during their 4th year. He recognised that the problem of the underprivileged remained, but saw progress towards the solution of this problem as more likely to be achieved through the reform of content and teaching methods than through a downward extension of compulsory schooling. The high enrolment ratios already existing meant that the extra costs would not be very substantial.

On teacher training the Minister said that there were two main elements in their programme: the updating of existing training courses, and the provision of refresher courses. From 1976 onwards, some 6,000 primary teachers will receive refresher training annually. For secondary teachers there were now seven large training colleges, each of 2 - 3,000 students, and efforts were also being made to provide refresher courses.

He acknowledged, however, the need for further research, and expressed his opinion that the main cause of lack of motivation in schools was the closed nature of the subjects taught, and their

absence of relevance to real problems. He gave as an example of relevance the use of biology to learn about the pollution of rivers.

Turning to Mr. Roeloffs, Dr. van Kemenade replied that participation education tries to combine both school-based and work-based learning. The basic aim was to achieve a constant interaction between school learning and work experience, but under the responsibility of the education authorities. There was still a problem concerning the status of the part-time students: are they students or workers? It was not that he was sceptical about on-the-job training, but he did perceive difficulties in the part-time system which were unlikely to be solved in the short term.

On streaming within the upper secondary school, the Minister pointed out that in the Netherlands streaming was still a controversial issue at the middle school level. There were two opposed camps: those who argued for streaming within the middle school, and those who pressed for its abolition even at upper secondary level. At present, he felt one should be realistic and aim for postponing choice within the middle school. Referring to the Danish delegate's notion of the upper secondary school as an education supermarket, he pointed out that this posed a problem of institutional size, and described how the Dutch were tackling this by a regional structure involving a central upper secondary school which contains the more costly facilities and acts as a 'service centre' for a ring of other upper schools. For the Dutch, however, the problem was further exacerbated by the obligation to cater for denominational requirements.

Mr. Papadopoulos of the Secretariat asked what plans were envisaged for institutional diversity within the school system, if the education authorities are to accept responsibility for the 16 - 18 year olds. Dr. van Kemenade foresaw two lines of development. First, there was participation education for young workers, combining general education and special vocational courses with the job experience they gain at work. In the second place, progress was being made towards greater flexibility and diversity in the various vocational courses offered by the existing upper schools, including the provision of work experience. Finally, there was active discussion on the place of education at the workplace, the training of the master craftsmen, the position and payment of the apprentices and so on. The eventual solution was for all the various streams to be united under the umbrella of the high school.

IV. CURRICULUM AND TEACHER TRAINING

Introducing this section, Professor Becker began by remarking that curriculum was to be understood as including both syllabus and methodology. The underlying aim of the Examiners' question was not to challenge the structures outlined in the Contours Memorandum, but to help the Dutch authorities' thinking on how to devise appropriate curricular sequences, and in this way to avoid the error that had been made elsewhere of attempting to introduce comprehensive education without first ensuring the necessary curricular development. This was important both at the primary level, where there was a wide measure of consensus on the proposed reforms, and at the middle school level which had excited more controversy. Similarly, reforms would be critically hindered if teachers were not at the same time helped and encouraged to modify their attitudes so that those accustomed to selection could adapt themselves to the needs of non-selective teaching.

He took up the notion of internal differentiation, describing it as a progression from earlier notions of streaming and setting. He had been struck by the fact that up to now there appeared to be in the Netherlands a considerable degree of homogeneity of approach between state and denominational schools, but feared that if positive steps were not taken there would be a potentially harmful proliferation of different curricula emerging as a consequence of the proposed reforms. Curricula must be developed in conjunction with the teachers as close to the schools as possible, and although legislative and administrative measures could be put through at governmental level, what actually happens in the classroom will depend on curriculum development and the support given to teachers to adapt their methods to different achievement levels.

Dr. van Kemenade expressed full agreement on the need for curriculum development as essential for educational innovation. He said that the government's role in this field is less prominent than in matters of structure, organisation, examinations and selection, but went on to describe efforts currently being made in this direction. There are some 60 local assistance services, working directly with the schools themselves and helping them to resolve pedagogical and curricular problems. At the national level, there

are three pedagogical centres as well as the recently established Foundation for Curriculum Development, and he hoped also to be able to set up a national centre for educational technology. One outstanding task is to assure coherence and co-operation between the national and local levels.

Referring specifically to the experiments under way, the Minister said that project groups had been set up, bringing teachers from the schools together with the local and national assistance services to work on a gamut of concrete problems, including curricular ones. It was in his power to present a bill before Parliament, for instance on the introduction of the middle school, but he saw a more effective innovation strategy as a gradualist one involving discussion and dissemination over a number of years. To promote the diffusion of the results obtained within the experimental schools, the latter had been linked to so-called 'resonance schools' which acted as sounding-boards, and this allowed more people to become aware of what was happening in the experiments.

The Minister had already described some of the measures taken for teacher training. Following the University Restructuring Act of 1975, university courses were now being designed which include options for those wishing to become teachers; a committee has been working for the past few years on the elaboration of training proposals for teachers in the integrated primary school, and a policy plan for refresher training had also been drawn up at the beginning of this year.

Two other aspects also merited attention. First the position of teachers within schools. At present, the teachers usually work as individual employees within a small organisation, and attempts were now being made to allow them more opportunity to exchange views and develop ideas in collaboration with their colleagues. This also raised the issue of decision-making within schools and the place of the teacher in that process. The second matter was the need for better faculties of educational sciences in the universities, in order to provide a solid research base for educational innovation. The Minister was at present engaged in deciding on the recommendations of a committee set up in 1973 to consider the reform of educational science faculties. He finished with a plea for more time and work to be devoted to this whole issue.

Mr. Arpin (Canada) asked to what extent the upper school would aim at providing a common curricular core across its three streams, **given its presumed aim of preparing people to fulfil their roles** as members of society. How can the upper school instil into its students the motivation to life-long learning?

Mr. Mandic (Yugoslavia) wanted to know more about teacher training. First, what was the balance between study of the subject to be

taught, study of educational theory, and actual teaching practice? Secondly, was the Minister satisfied that teachers are adequately prepared for their tasks?

Mr. Andersson (Sweden) wished to adduce Swedish experience to support the Examiners' remarks on the importance of curricular reform. After earlier experimentation, Sweden had introduced comprehensive education in the early 1960s, and followed this up with a further reform in 1968; they had achieved a certain measure of success, but there was a feeling that they had concentrated too much on structure and organisation and not enough on curriculum. A bill was now before Parliament which aimed at changing what happens in the classroom itself, in other words shifting attention to the content of education, and this entailed changing the decision-making structure within schools and involving students more in discussions on pedagogical issues. Finally, Mr. Andersson wished to emphasise the effects of the grading system - of course it stimulates those who are successful, but a real comprehensive system must come to grips with the problem of avoiding the converse negative impact on those who fail.

Replying to the Canadian delegate, Dr. van Kemenade said that there will be some common curricular base, including the mother tongue and some education in social relationships; the common character of these elements would be assured by the demands of examinations, but there was as yet no clear-cut identification of what exactly should form this common core.

Mr. Jansen, Director General of Educational Services in the Dutch Ministry of Education, explained that student primary teachers spent on average one day a week in schools, and also worked in their pedagogical academies, but it would be difficult to separate out exactly the amount of time devoted to subject learning and to practice since the two are deliberately interwoven. Dr. van Kemenade took up the theme for secondary school teachers, where there is at present a dual system, traditional colleges existing alongside new institutions of teacher training. In the latter roughly 60 per cent of the student's time is devoted to his subject, 20 - 25 per cent to educational theory and 15 - 20 per cent to practice, but subject learning and pedagogical learning are increasingly interwoven. He added that at present the system of teacher training was, as elsewhere, rather complicated, with several different levels of training and of salary scales. He appreciated the Swedish delegate's remarks concerning the comprehensive schools, but argued that Sweden was only now able to turn its attention to the content because it had already achieved the basic structural reforms.

V. PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Professor Peston wanted to stress at the outset that one thing the Examiners were not complaining about was a lack of committees in the Netherlands - and Dr. van Kemenade interposed that at the last count there were some 400 such bodies. They simply wanted to see the potential of the Contours Memorandum realised, and thought that this might best be realised if a distinction was drawn between day-to-day activity and overall strategic effort, and this latter became the responsibility of a central planning group. He emphasised that the Examiners had not conceived of the group as necessarily separate from the Ministry of Education; what they wanted was an assurance that behind the various initiatives there was a continuing impulse towards effective implementation. This was all that he wished to say by way of introduction - other questions were contained in the report itself.

Dr. van Kemenade thought that there were two immediate dangers which presented themselves to him in connection with the idea of such a group. The first was the tendency to depoliticise education, to take it out of the arena of public democratic debate and treat it as a purely technical subject, most amenable to handling by a restricted group of experts. He was fiercely opposed to such a tendency, with its highly technocratic overtones. Secondly, a proposal of this sort ran a considerable risk of inducing in the schools a feeling of exclusion from the decision-making process, and a sense of alienation from the policies thus formulated. This would be intrinsically undesirable and would in any case be sufficient to render the policies largely unworkable.

The Minister had already referred to the several innovation committees for educational reform - one each for primary education, the middle school, part-time education and the Open School; these elaborate policy aims and experimental plans make recommendations for the evaluation of experiments, and propose means of disseminating the results. Departmental project groups exist as counterparts to the innovation committees, co-ordinating their activities and helping the Minister to formulate his decisions. Dr. van Kemenade expressed his judgement that the complementary functions of the innovation committees and the departmental project groups were sufficient to render a central planning group superfluous.

Mr. Sette (Italy) wanted to know what would be the structure of the new higher education institutions, and what place would research have in them. Mrs. Mela (Finland) asked whether the Contours Memorandum envisaged a reduced role for research in the universities. The Minister explained that the growth of higher education enrolments had posed a threat to the balance between teaching and research. The 1975 University Restructuring Act has implications for research in four respects:

i) within faculties, a clearer distinction between research and general and professional studies, in order not to waste research resources;
ii) the institution of a post-doctoral research year;
iii) the introduction of research assistants, numbering several thousand; and
iv) (a measure worked out in co-operation with the Ministry for Science Policy) the funding of research along two lines: regular on-going research, and specially-funded research directed to specific projects.

As far as the higher education sector was concerned, the short-term priority was to concentrate the colleges of higher education, currently numbering some 350, into larger institutions roughly similar to British polytechnics. In the long run, however, it was envisaged that there should be a single sector embracing university faculties and higher vocational institutions.

Mr. Leestma, speaking for the US, referred to the enormous variety of proposals contained in the Contours Memorandum. What provision was there for a rolling assessment of the system as it evolved towards its various goals, and what would be its capacity for continual self-renewal? The Minister referred to his previous statements on teacher retraining and on the co-ordination of the assistance services provided at local and national level. But he stressed that the main impetus for self-renewal must come from the individuals who make up society, in particular those directly involved in the schools - teachers and parents. In this respect he judged that the Contours Memorandum had already achieved a substantial measure of success in stimulating public discussion of its proposals.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Professor Becker said that for him the most important feature was the Netherlands' willingness to embark on an exercise of this nature at the very time when there was a prevailing mood of resignation and perhaps indifference in educational policy-making circles.

To achieve educational reform one needs to put a great effort into changing public consciousness and expectations, which will only evolve over a matter of years. The great virtue of the Contours Memorandum was its readiness to place its reform proposals in a realistic time perspective; although ambitious, they were not bedevilled by the impatience which had elsewhere resulted in premature and hence unreliable judgements. In conclusion, Professor Becker expressed the hope that the problem-sharing approach exhibited by the Contours Memorandum would meet with a positive response both within the Netherlands and in other OECD Member countries.

Annex

MEMBERS OF THE NETHERLANDS DELEGATION AT THE MEETING

Dr. J.A. van KEMENADE	Minister of Education and Science
Mr. Th. D. JANSEN	Director General of Educational Services and Inspectorate
Mr. F.G. SCHIJFF	Deputy Director General for Higher Education
Mr. J. BOON	Deputy Director General for Secondary Education
Mr. H. van der ESCH	Directorate for Higher Education Policy.

EXAMINERS

Professor Helmut BECKER	Director, Institut für Bildungsforschung in der Max Planck Gesellschaft, Berlin.
Mr. Lennart SANDGREN	Permanent Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Education, Sweden Stockholm.
Professor Maurice PESTON	Professor of Economics, Queen Mary College, London.

Professor Denis KALLEN, Professor of General and Comparative Education at the University of Amsterdam, and an OECD Consultant, acted throughout as adviser to the Examiners.

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